A Space for Peace: Inclusion of Youth and Peacebuilding in the Post-2015 Development Agenda
A report of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders
The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a global network of 60 youth peace organisations, active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. UNOY Peacebuilders is a non-political, non-religious, non-governmental organisation that welcomes youth peace initiatives, organisations, and young peacebuilders regardless of gender, ethnicity, social class, religion, or any other distinction. UNOY Peacebuilders develops expertise on specific themes within peacebuilding that are most relevant for the members. The UNOY Peacebuilders as a network organisation contributes to the work of its members and affiliates in two fundamental ways: Capacity building and Advocacy and Campaigning.

This report would not have been possible without the assistance of the UNOY Peacebuilders’ Youth Advocacy Team.

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Special thanks must be given the respondents, young peacebuilders, in the UNOY Peacebuilders network. Without their insight, courage and steadfast determination to bring peace to communities around the world, this report would not have been possible.

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Executive Summary

Today, 1.5 billion people live in conflict affected and fragile states. While there has been progress, no conflict affected or fragile state has achieved even one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Alarmingly, most conflict affected areas and fragile states have predominantly young populations. Caught between childhood and adulthood, youth lack specialised and differential treatment that enables their enhanced participation in processes of peace, security and development. To realise a truly transformative shift that positively impacts development in conflict affected and fragile states, young peacebuilders must be given a space to act in a global agenda beyond 2015.

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a leading global network of 60 grassroots youth-led or youth-based peacebuilding organisations in 36 countries. UNOY Peacebuilders urges United Nations Member States to better incorporate both the importance of youth participation in peacebuilding, and a positive peace framework into the post-2015 development agenda.

Youth based and youth led organisations serve the need of an otherwise under served demographic. Youth peacebuilding organisations, in particular, actively work to promote a culture of peace, intercultural dialogue and non-violent conflict transformation. Alongside young peacebuilders, youth organisations have an important role to play in implementing the forthcoming development agenda and shaping the course of the world. Youth have been applauded for their ability to positively transform small communities and societies at large, and, it is for this exact reason, that peacebuilders must be present in the post-2015 development narrative.

This report makes a case for greater inclusion of youth in issues of peace and security, while underscoring the sheer necessity for positive peace to become a goal in the peace and security agenda of the post 2015 development framework.

116 respondents from 25 countries participated in various ways in UNOY Peacebuilders’ post-2015 MDG consultation. Their experiences and grassroots insight into the lives of conflict affected youth and young peacebuilders around the world have informed the reports main conclusions and recommendations.

This report will inform the lobbying strategy of UNOY Peacebuilders as we continue to advocate for a greater role of youth in peacebuilding and security processes. This strategy has two pillars: first to lobby United Nations (UN) Member States to ensure that peacebuilding and young peacebuilders are included in the post-2015 development agenda. Secondly, the wider and more challenging endeavor of UNOY Peacebuilders is to lobby for a UN Security Council resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. The stories articulated in this report will form a strong qualitative evidence base for this advocacy work.

The UNOY Peacebuilders Secretariat is based in The Hague, the Netherlands. As we gather the data and write this report the Peace Palace celebrates its centenary. This historic juncture serves as a timely and powerful reminder of the importance and imperative of peace education and the promotion of a culture of peace. It, moreover, reaffirms that we all have a role to play to contribute towards the establishment of peaceful societies. 100 years of the Peace Palace puts peace - not war back on the agenda; it reminds us all of the historical injustices that led Andrew Carnegie to promote knowledge, education and dialogue over ignorance, misinformation and violence. Now, more than ever, we cannot let this vision slide into obscurity.

1 World Bank (March 2013) Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations Brief.
2 DFID (2005) Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states.
Major recommendations

UNOY Peacebuilders’ consultation process has catalogued the experiences of peacebuilders at the local level in relation to the MDGs, the challenges they face in daily work and life, and their aspirations for the post-2015 development agenda. Supported by theoretical insight, this report makes a case for the inclusion of young peacebuilders in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This has resulted in six concrete recommendations to Member States on how the interests of youth and peacebuilders can be integrated in the post-2015 development agenda. Illustrative targets and indicators support these recommendations.

We urge member states to:
1. Include peacebuilding and targets for positive peace in a goal on peace and security in the post-2015 development agenda
2. Mainstream youth and peacebuilding among all future goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development agenda
3. Recognise and include young people as specific stakeholders in a goal on peace and security, noting that they are both affected by conflict and instrumental to peacebuilding
4. Recognise and include the role of youth led and youth based peacebuilding organisations in peacebuilding activities and promoting a culture of peace
5. Create a participatory monitoring framework that has built in mechanisms to ensure young people's active participation in evaluating the post-2015 agenda.
6. Commit to funding resources and mechanisms for raising awareness and extending the outreach of the post-2015 agenda to all young people, especially to vulnerable or marginalised groups of young people.

Illustrative targets of how to include youth and peacebuilding in a global goal on peace and security. All targets are time bound by the deadline of the Post-2015 agenda (supposedly 2030).

Youth:
- Promote educational institutions as zones of peace and eliminate all attacks on schools and students by armed forces and aggressors
- Ensure that youth perspectives are given due consideration in decision making processes of local, national and international governance, especially on issues that affect them
- Include young people and youth organisations as key stakeholders in new global partnerships

Peace:
- Ensure that, all young people participate in peace and human rights education, either through formal or non-formal education
- Reduce violent conflict over natural resources
- Stem the internal stressors that lead to violent conflict including those related to youth unemployment and the political exclusion of young people

The indicators remain a working document and will be released as a supplement to this report in 2014.
# Bibliography

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Introduction

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 youth.\(^3\) The effects of globalisation and shifting economic, social and political spheres impact the daily lives of youth. Social exclusion and a lack of opportunities perpetuate youth disillusionment, which, in turn, effects their transition to adulthood. Youth are also affected by un- and under-employment, limited education, poor governance, sexual and reproductive health issues, and limited civic participation. Undeniably, these sites of structural violence are exacerbated in conflict, post-conflict and peacebuilding states. Although conflict may provide an opportunity for change, if not managed correctly and peacefully, it can escalate into violence.\(^4\) Moreover, in post conflict contexts, “exclusion is one of the most important factors that trigger a relapse into violence.”\(^5\) Therefore, strengthening international mechanisms that specifically address youth needs is not only a demographic and democratic imperative, but also crucial in preventing conflicts from escalating into violence.

Current international mechanisms do not sufficiently address the specific situation of youth peace and security. The World Programme of Action (WPAY) review in 2005 is one of the most progressive documents, surmising “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.”\(^6\) However, this recognition has failed to be reflected in any enforceable programs of action or within the framework of the MDGs.

We call to strengthen and create international mechanisms that address youth needs. **We urge UN Member States to guarantee the protection of youth rights, such as survival, protection, development and participation in issues of peace and security.** Mechanisms to encourage a culture of peace and tolerance between young people must also be developed and implemented. This would help discourage youth from participating in violence or armed conflict, xenophobia, racial discrimination, gender-based discrimination and drug or arms trafficking.

We advocate for youth perspectives to be included in peacebuilding processes, and decision-making related to peace and conflict. The inclusion and participation of young people enhances their capabilities and affords them the opportunity to improve their lives, as well as their communities. Involving youth in peacebuilding processes, as stakeholders and decision makers, allows them to gain ownership of the policies that affect them, and all of us.

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Understanding negative and positive peace

Negative peace refers to peace as the absence of war and physical violence. Positive peace on the other hand is the presence of peaceful and just structures and relations, with reduced levels, or ideally an absence, of physical and structural violence. This state is defined positively as the presence of social justice and is connected to the analysis and practice of social and economic development. More recent interpretations of this concept include aspects of the ‘good society’: universal rights, economic well-being, ecological balance, and other core values (Galtung 1969; elaborated by Fisher et al. 2000). Positive peace is sometimes referred to as sustainable peace (Reychler and Paffenholz 2001).

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Why youth and peacebuilding?

Despite being both causal agents and victims of conflict and displacement, youth are one of the groups provided the least support in conflict and post-conflict settings.\textsuperscript{7} Propelled by social exclusion, lack of opportunities, and, in the context of armed conflicts, a lack of or slow implementation of public policies that promote reparation and reconciliation, youth can become exposed and vulnerable to armed or political recruitment and exploitation.

One of the obstacles in targeting youth is finding a common definition. While the UN defines youth as people between 15 and 24, youth are, in reality, a very heterogeneous group. Youth are seen as a transitional state between childhood and adulthood, a period itself that is highly dependent on the socio-cultural environment. The situation of violent armed conflict exacerbates the problem of finding a common definition because it forces children and youth to assume adult roles and functions. In this report we use UNOY Peacebuilders definition of youth – people aged 18-30 years.

In situations of conflict, protection mechanisms already exist for other vulnerable groups such as women and children. UN Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), formalised protection against children in conflict, including the recruitment of child soldiers, timely reporting of child rights violations, maiming and killing children as well as using sexual violence against them. UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security addresses women’s equal participation in peace and reconciliation processes. However, with the transition to adulthood even more prolonged for this generation of young people, youth specific policy making for 18-30 years is needed more than ever. Youth must be seen as a different group with different potential.

Essentially, this report argues that it is crucial to recognize the positive role that youth can play in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. By transforming the youth bulge, a theory correlating large youth populations with increased civil conflict, with examples of youth driven initiatives, this report documents how communities can leverage youth engagement to uproot structural violence inherent in many conflict areas. Ensuring the active, systemic, and meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding 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.

We believe in a paradigmatic shift in the perception of youth’s role in conflict that transforms youth from being victims or agents of violence to youth as active agents of peacebuilding and positive social change.

In post conflict countries, as much as physical infrastructure needs rebuilding, so does the fabric of society – relationships and, importantly, trust; trust between different conflicting parties and trust between society and the government. Young people, as more open to change, innovative, concerned about long-term stability, and exhibiting a willingness to work hard, are in an active and important position to facilitate the rebuilding of social capital. Yet, these capacities and potentials of youth often go unrecognised. Active participation in “non-governmental institutions such as peace initiatives, churches and youth clubs could provide frameworks through which the relation to the former enemy can be redefined.”\textsuperscript{8}

Commentators have further suggested that various opportunities exist for youth involvement at a community level. There is much to be gained from programming that works to ‘spiral up’ social capital resources that strengthen individuals, strengthen groups, increase cooperation across generations, and contribute to a healthier, more vibrant community. Youth interest and


engagement can increase when social capital is built alongside younger people and into the overall planning and implementation processes.9

Young people should not be seen as a homogenous category.10 The terminology ‘young peacebuilders’ is not mutually exclusive to youth in fragile or conflict prone states. The underpinning values of peacebuilding to promote intercultural dialogue, and a culture of tolerance, diversity and equality are relevant to societies and youth groups across the globe. UNOY Peacebuilders’ experience reflects the importance of human rights and peace education in the communities where they work.

**Enhancing social cohesion in peacebuilding processes**

Political or economic exclusion, horizontal inequalities and discrimination undermine sustainable peace. 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. Participation and dialogue enhance social cohesion and national ownership, and they leverage resources and knowledge for peacebuilding existent within post-conflict societies.


**Young peacebuilders and the post-2015 agenda consultation process**

Many post-2015 development agenda consultations have taken place globally, but few if any have focused on the needs and aspirations of youth in conflict and post-conflict societies nor young peacebuilders. Previous consultations have built a strong evidence base in support of child and youth participation and in different sectors. UNESCO’s consultation has promoted the importance of issues such as development, education, healthcare and environmental sustainability. Restless Development issued a poll showing that young people wanted to be involved in the work of the MDGs and contribute to their development.11 Saferworld acknowledged that specific MDGs failed to focus on certain issues that arise during a conflict.12 Their assessment of the MDG’s suggests that issues such as reducing violence, fair access to social services, transparency in government and addressing external issues that lead to conflict, should receive greater attention and action. However, their recommendations did not explicitly concentrate on youth involvement.

Additionally, the World We Want consultation report on the theme of good governance mention that youth need to be involved in policy shifts, but fails to acknowledge that young people need to be involved in peacekeeping and conflict resolution practices, as a part of the good governance agenda.13 It is also important to recognise the role of gender in the post-2015 agenda. Care International comment that MDG targets do not adequately capture multiple dimensions of gender inequality and injustice, while the World We Want for Girls state that the MDGs must do more to address the issues

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of girls and young women. It is well acknowledged that involvement of younger women and girls in peacebuilding practices is crucial to sustainable peace.

Recent literature, such as Denney’s account, quite strongly contends that there is insufficient evidence to justify the inclusion of positive peace in the post-2015 development agenda. It is suggested that the line of inquiry that argues positive peace “is instrumental to development”\textsuperscript{14} cannot actually be supported by concrete evidence.

This report is an attempt to begin building, or rather continue highlighting, the evidence base to support the intrinsic value of a positive peace approach to compliment negative peace efforts. We argue that ‘peaceful societies’, the overarching objective of the peace and security goal in the High Level Panel (HLP) report, can only be achieved if a culture of peace, peace education and active youth inclusion in processes of peace and security are recognised and included in the post-2015 framework. It has been argued elsewhere that while the MDGs tend to focus on “tangible and measurable aspects of human welfare, aspects that are less easily measured such as psychological effects of conflict and armed violence are no less important.”\textsuperscript{15} Supported by the stories and examples of young peacebuilders across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, it will be demonstrated that seeking a shift in normative behaviour and attitudes, a critical component of peacebuilding, can only be achieved by approaching peace as a holistic concept.

Firstly, chapter 1 will explain how, in the absence of a specific goal on peace and security, young peacebuilders adapted the current MDGs in their daily work. It will be demonstrated that, while young peacebuilders were innovative in their approach to the MDGs, disparate efforts to ‘add’ peacebuilding to other frameworks undermines the emphasis on peace and are, thus, insufficient. Chapter 2 evaluates the (HLP) report and the UN Secretary General’s response on the post-2015 agenda through the lens of young peacebuilders. Key messages of the reports, such as young people, peace, conflict and non-formal education, will be evaluated. Chapter 3 makes a case for the inclusion of specific targets on youth and peacebuilding in the post-2015 development agenda by highlighting challenges faced by young peacebuilders. Building on this evidence, the report will conclude with concrete recommendations supported by targets and indicators for UN Member States to consider when finalising the post-2015 development agenda.

\textit{“Children and young people’s participation in peacebuilding contributes to positive changes in the lives of children, families, schools and communities.”}

Save the Children, (2012) \textit{“Children and young people as actors in peace process and peace building”}, (p6).

\textsuperscript{14} Denny L, (2013) \textit{“Consulting the Evidence”}, ODI, (p7)

\textsuperscript{15} Saferworld, “Issue paper 1: The impact of conflict and violence on achieving development”, \textit{Saferworld November 24, 2012}, (p1).
Methodology

The overall goal of UNOY Peacebuilders' consultation on the post-2015 development agenda was to gather qualitative data on the realities of young peacebuilders in the UNOY Peacebuilders network. We sought to gather stories about how young peacebuilders work, how they as young people are active as different forms of peacebuilders in their contexts, and about the challenges faced by youth peacebuilding organisations. By doing so, we hope to bring forth the voice of young peacebuilders to international discussions on the post-2015 agenda.

To achieve this end, the aim of UNOY Peacebuilders' consultation was threefold:
1. To learn how young peacebuilders interacted with the current MDGs – the successes, the failures and the gaps
2. To uncover young peacebuilders hopes and aspirations for the new development agenda – what policies and structures will facilitate a greater role for and recognition of the work of young peacebuilders and sustainable peace?
3. To hear how young peacebuilders want to involve themselves in the post 2015 agenda – what role can they play in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

Seven young people aged from 22-29 years old in the UNOY Peacebuilders network conducted the research. In the first phase an online questionnaire was distributed among the network. Following this, semi-structured interviews were conducted the aim to delve deeper into the issues raised from the questionnaire, and to develop a snapshot of the lives of young peacebuilders across the globe. Two focus group discussions were also held during the implementation of two UNOY Peacebuilders activities, one in Georgia and the other in the Netherlands. Finally, UNOY Peacebuilders conducted a workshop on the International Day of Peace where participants analysed goal 11 of the HLP report. Given the outreach of the UNOY Peacebuilders network and efforts to engage with youth via social media, young people not affiliated with a UNOY Peacebuilders member organisation have also participated in the consultation. As young peacebuilders, their views have also been incorporated.

Throughout, a desk-literature review was conducted of different stakeholder responses to the HLP report. The research team also actively attended and participated in both on- and off-line events on the post-2015 development agenda. These included general stakeholder discussions and thematic consultations specific to peace, security and/or youth.

Together, the online questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions, workshop, literature review and stakeholder meetings, have framed UNOY's response to and position on the post-2015 development agenda.

Breakdown of research participants

- Online consultation: 58 participants from 19 countries
- Interviews: 8 participants from 5 countries
- Focus group discussion: 20 participants from 6 countries
- Workshop: 30 participants from 6 countries

TOTAL: 116 participants from 25 countries:
Chapter 1: Young peacebuilders and the MDGs

For the last decade, the MDGs have framed most of the discussions on governments’ development priorities and strategy for the last decade. With less than 1000 days left to the expiry of the MDGs, governments, intergovernmental organisations and civil society organisations have begun to evaluate the impact created by the MDGs. It has become imperative for development actors to thoroughly scrutinize and assess the MDGs. This has been done to both understand past success and failures, and to help frame the next global development agenda. Many aforementioned reviews have been conducted with the aim of understanding what role young people had to play in the implementation of the MDGs in their respective countries. Some findings have realised the role and the importance of young people in both popularising the MDGs and working on projects related to MDGs.  

Not one of the eight MDGs aims to end violence or promote peacebuilding at any level, be it community, country or global stage. For young peacebuilders, this is where the MDGs have ultimately fallen short - no society can make marked improvements in the livelihoods of the poor, excluded, and conflict-affected households and communities without an end to violence. Consequently, progress towards other MDG targets will be stalled or in decline.

UNOY Peacebuilders has interviewed young peacebuilders from around the world and found many stories that vividly depict the need for young peacebuilders to be part of the development agenda. This approach was twofold. First, the contributions of young people and youth groups towards the achievement of the MDGs were identified. Those interventions that were successful in local communities and those that were not, was the next line of inquiry. Secondly, UNOY Peacebuilders learnt how the MDG framework failed to support the work of young peacebuilders. What were the expectations and realities of youth organisations working in the field of conflict transformation and peacebuilding? Were interventions such as conflict prevention, violence reduction, and livelihood improvements, strengthened or ignored by the MDG framework?

Results from UNOY Peacebuilders online consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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Youth peacebuilding organisations and the MDG framework

Although the MDGs did not have an explicit goal on peace and security, young peacebuilders adopted certain aspects of the MDG framework to their local context. 33 of 56 respondents to the online questionnaire agreed that the current MDGs have had a positive impact in the communities they work, while 17 were unable to say. Particularly, goals that contributed to stability, social cohesion and peace were addressed in the work of young peacebuilders. Many participating organisations have worked to promote gender equality, women’s empowerment, access to basic education, maternal healthcare and have strived to be a part of a global partnership. These particular goals seek to redress social inequalities, which, if not properly addressed, may contribute to situations of conflict in already fragile states.

UNOY Peacebuilders’ member, Young Leaders Sierra Leone (YLSL), has adapted the MDG framework to their local context. Marius Musa Kargbo explained:

“The YLSL has undertaken several projects gearing toward the MDGs, from the local perspective. We have been focusing on empowering young people through education, as we do believe education is a priority and the key to success.”

Other organisations, such as Initiatives and Actions for Peace and Development (IAP) in Burundi and Chanan Development Association (CDA), Pakistan, have used the language of the MDGs to support their programs. IAP tailored the alleviate poverty goal of MDG one to their work on social entrepreneurship:

“Since the creation of IAP, we have been working on sensitizing youth about the need of social entrepreneurship in order to eradicate poverty. We refer to MDG one. Our strategy is first of all, sensitising in order to call youth to change their mentalities.”

Similarly, Sana explains how in Pakistan, youth are empowered “by getting entrepreneurial skills and opening up their small skills businesses to eradicate poverty”.

One of the greatest assets of the MDGs is the legitimacy it gives to youth organisations to have a recognised framework to operate in. Amma summarises the various impacts the MDGs have had in her community in Pakistan:

“Greater focus on the MDGs brought greater technical and financial support to the development sector in my community, which led to increased interventions in areas like women’s empowerment. Consequently there were more advocacy efforts and lobbying for pro-women legislation with the result, in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, being the initiation of legislation on women’s issues including enforcement of ownership rights of women and the elimination of the custom of forced marriage. Likewise in the education sector, the community stressed the quality of and access to girls’ education. The community got better awareness of issues like HIV Aids. Civil society became more vibrant in efforts towards building global partnerships, which in turn led to increased sharing of activities and transferring of knowledge, increased intercultural understanding and networking.”

The MDGs give motivation to young people and communities to work towards a common objective. This has been the case in Kenya, Egypt, DRC and Eritrea:

“Youth leadership and participation has been enhanced mainly in the community. Young people take the lead role (...) to embrace change that is inevitable among the youth, through peer to peer education programs” (George Akwiri, The Youth Congress, Kenya).

“MDGs have a great impact here actually. First of all they influenced young people who became more familiar with social service work and who are doing their best now to be leading individuals who have a positive impact on the community where they live then on the whole world one day” (Mahmoud Alaa Mahmoud Ibrahim, Etijah, Egypt).

“We have used them (MDGs) as guidelines and framework to involve youth…and with available capacities, we used them as resources and references as well as other tools like Global Peace Index” (Claudel Nkunda, Groupement de Promotion Integrale, DRC).
“Knowing that the achieving a (MDG) goal was close, causes communities to work sustainably towards its success” (Rahel Weldeab, National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, Eritrea).

These examples illustrate that the presence of a global development framework has given structure, meaning, and legitimacy to the work of youth peacebuilding organisations. Calling on universally recognised and accepted norms, has proven to be a powerful advocacy, awareness raising and fundraising tool. In the context of the MDGs, young peacebuilders have been effective in expanding the boundaries of the goals and targets to accommodate their work. However, as the next sub-chapter details, the MDGs have fallen short of providing a concrete framework for young peacebuilders to tackle real issues of peace and conflict.

Case Study: Glocal Tour Romania

Glocal Tour was a story, more than a project. It gave us meaningful interactions with people of all ages and has made us more aware of the Romanian reality when it comes to development. After interacting with thousands of people it was apparent that, while the MDGs are received by many as an interesting as a topic, individuals find it difficult to identify with the goals at a local level. Although Romania is not dealing with the severe problems of the Global South, it is still far from being a developed country. However, I personally think people did not relate to the MDGs as being their own. Initiatives such as ‘MY World’ platform, gathering opinions of people worldwide on the post-2015 agenda are very much welcome. The MDGs should be representative for people and societies worldwide, because even though the development issues are not be the same, problems still exist and individuals are interested in a better life quality for them and their communities. (eg. high unemployment, climate change, addressing violence.)

In my opinion, the biggest successes we saw resulting from the local activities within Glocal Tour were the trainings we held in schools, in Roma communities and orphanages - it is grassroots work that has the power to generate immediate change in mindsets, perspectives and attitudes. Personally, it was the most rewarding part of the project. A project like Glocal, aiming to introduce education for development in schools, is very important and we were happy to see that most teachers were genuinely interested in the materials we provided. Ideally, it is my opinion that this topic should be introduced in the schools curricula and more teachers should be trained in this direction, so that children learn to position themselves, from an early age, in a global context. In this way, they can understand their roles and responsibilities and where they can make a change – from something as simple as recycling to choosing to do advocacy work for generating change and improving livelihoods.

Text by: Anca Gliga, Glocal Tour Project Coordinator

Photo credits: Andrei Balint
How the MDG framework has failed young peacebuilders?

From the outset, the MDG framework was limited in its impact on peace considering a direct goal on peace and conflict was omitted from the MDG targets. Across all regions involved in UNOY Peacebuilders’ consultation, there was consensus that the MDGs failed to meet the needs of grassroots peace activists. In South Asia, Iram and Preetam from India identify this loss when saying: “There is no direct framework or guidelines to work as young peacebuilders. All the MDGs are for other groups or societies but youth and peacebuilding support is lacking” (Iram Parveen, India).

“As of now, neither the MDG framework nor the Government give any space for young peacebuilders to voice our opinions and/or advocate for the issues concerned” (Preetam Sengupta, India).

Issues of good governance, and the necessity for improved accountability mechanisms and addressing corruption also featured prominently in the discussions: “The current MDG framework is quite helpful but it lacks in areas in need of dire attention on the ground, speaking particularly of my context. The most important being good governance, peacebuilding and armed violence reduction because basic services like education and better health care would be taken care of if the delivery mechanism becomes efficient, transparent and, above all, free of corrupt practices” (Amna Durrani, Pakistan).

In post conflict contexts, young peacebuilders have also linked good governance practices to the importance of rebuilding trust and social capital in conflict-affected communities: “As a young peacebuilder, I want to extend my hand in advocacy and peacekeeping but the MDG framework does not support this. Due to this reason, youth like me in war affected countries like Nepal have no support from MDG framework to work more on building trust and cooperation between the major political parties, to reach peace based agreements, to meet the needs of conflict affected victims, to end impunity and address increasing violence, lawlessness and insecurity. As a peace builder, it also does not support me to work in order to mend the damaged social relations and retrieve the development momentum that has been lost due to conflict. (Kanchan Amatya, Jagriti Child and Youth Concern Nepal, Nepal).

In Colombia, the quality of the measurable MDG outcomes was brought into question: “The impact is measured in terms of quantity and not quality, in that sense, yes, is true that there is more health coverage but the standards are not the best and that needs to improve now that there is so much being made” (Nathalie Mendez, Colombia).

For many young peacebuilders working in Europe, peace and human rights education seemed an obvious inclusion in targets on education: “As an educator I was hopeful that the improved educational systems would include a peace education component but this was not the case. More could be done towards peace promotion and building” (Nicola Lazzari, France).

Thus, one of the important issues ignored by the MDGs was the importance of young people to know their rights and to exert these rights in the promotion of development, peace and conflict prevention. The MDGs inspired governments to take action towards universal primary education but have not mentioned the quality of that education, nor attempted to integrate peace education. In previous studies, young people have identified a lack of promotion of interethnic dialogue, a need to strengthen capacity of young people in promoting peace, local ownership of programs in collaboration with young people as stakeholders, and youth involvement in decision making as
important to the peacebuilding agenda. Additionally, the explicit need for young people to have access to jobs and better education opportunities after primary education was also identified.

**Indeed, some of the most interesting and hopeful revelations from the consultation highlight young peacebuilders enthusiasm to be included in the MDG framework through inclusive participation in global partnerships.**

“The 8th MDG is more than others directed towards peacebuilding and peacemaking, as establishing framework of partnership cooperation is one of the best ways to prevent and overcome conflicts” (Anahit Chilingaryan, Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly, Armenia).

Yet, despite the call for global partnerships, many felt they remained on the periphery:

“Hardly has there been any discussion as to how development can bring about peace or why a global partnership towards development is needed in order build a culture of peace throughout the world” (Rahel Weldeab, National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, Eritrea).

Critically, young people have been absent in forging global partnerships. This lack of attention to youth and disparate efforts to integrate them has resulted in young people being excluded from discourses of active agents in building secured communities. Yet, in all the discussions and consultations, young peacebuilders expressed the willingness to be part of a framework through which they can contribute to social, economic and political development in their communities.

**Peace was never stated as a primary MDG. Through creative interpretation of the different targets, however, young peacebuilders have demonstrated success in the implementing the MDGs thanks to their broad understanding of peacebuilding. But to garner greater support and to realise stand-alone objectives of peacebuilding, young people have continued to reiterate the importance of having peace and peacebuilding been listed as a primary goal in subsequent development agendas.**

UNOY Peacebuilders found unprecedented zeal in young people to include peacebuilding in the post-2015 development agenda and to ensure a space for young people to work towards building peaceful societies. **But what is it young people need to be successful peacebuilders, and what is it they can offer?**

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Chapter 2: Youth and peace in the reports of the High Level Panel and UN Secretary General

It goes without saying that current debates, reports and consultations on the post-2015 development agenda capture unique and unprecedented insights into the aspirations, needs and hopes of millions of people around the world. Striving to answer the question of what is it that we, humanity, need in order to achieve ‘the world we want’, the global consultation process is an attempt to create a broad snapshot of the state of the world. Importantly, efforts have been made to include those voices that often remain on the periphery of global conversations.

The following pages critique two of the most prominent reports, that of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons18 and the report of the UN Secretary General (UNSG)19 in follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. The HLP report outlines five transformative shifts required to create an encompassing universal agenda for sustainable and stable development. In doing so the HLP note that the MDGs “were silent on the devastating effects of conflict and violence on development”20 and recommends any future goals be “widely applicable in countries with different levels of income and in those emerging from conflict or recovering from natural disaster”.21 As chapter 1 has demonstrated, some young peacebuilders felt excluded from the processes of the MDGs. This recognition by the HLP is, therefore, an important step towards a goal on peace and security in the post-2015 development agenda. Chapter 1 has, moreover, elucidated how peacebuilders were marginalised from the forging of global partnerships (MDG 8). With the admission that “People were working hard – but often separately – on interlinked problems,”22 there is hope that future efforts to create global partnerships will be inclusive of young people and peacebuilders.

The report of UNSG Ban Ki-Moon, ‘A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015’, has been mostly well received by the development and sustainability sectors. A notable feature of the report and indeed the entire post-2015 development agenda process is the attempt to address the interconnected objectives of economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Both the HLP report and UNSG’s response have attempted to bridge the divide between the development sector and sustainability goals. Noting that youth un- and under-employment are contributing towards social unrest; that a lack of youth inclusion further marginalises youth from ownership over programmes of action; and environmental conflicts are ever increasing, UNOY Peacebuilders welcomes this multi-dimensional and multi-disciplined approach.

Critically, however, we approach these reports from the perspective of young peacebuilders - that is young people in conflict-affected or fragile states; those living in a post conflict contexts or emerging democracies; young grassroots activists involved in peacebuilding and community reconstruction activities; and youth workers fighting for equality, tolerance and the stability of peaceful societies.

Through this lens, both reports fall short of either acknowledging or giving space to young peacebuilders in the proposed post-2015 development agenda. The following analysis highlights where young people could be given a greater role in issues of peace and security. First, references to peace and young people are assessed in the HLP and SG reports. Secondly, other reports on the post-2015 agenda are analysed in brief. Combined with insights from the UNOY Peacebuilders network, this theoretical analysis has informed the recommendations of this report.

20 Op cit, 18 (Executive Summary)
21 Ibid (p14)
22Ibid (p7)
Peace

The HLP report makes many, but two particularly notable, references to peace. First and foremost, the report places emphasis on ensuring stable and peace peaceful societies exemplified by illustrative goal 11. Young peacebuilders around the world welcome the recognition of peace and stability as a stand-alone goal in the new agenda. The HLP report, furthermore, links peace and justice to sustainable development and recognises that peace is intricately linked with other social and economic rights. This expanding definition of the conditions that foster peaceful societies will serve to strengthen the work of young peacebuilders.

However, there are several points of concern in illustrative goal 11. Firstly it is alarming that youth are not mentioned in any discussions on peace and security. Protection of children in conflict has been rightfully mentioned, but young peacebuilders, or even youth as agents of peace and conflict have not been acknowledged. Although youth is a “cross cutting issue”, young people must be recognised as a specific stakeholder both affected by conflict and instrumental in peacebuilding.

There needs to be a shift in the way the international community engages with youth in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Youth need to be a part of all three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy. The HLP report touches broadly on these three pillars. Jobs and inclusive growth are referred to as deterrents to recruitment into armed forces;23 “jobs and safety” can improve social cohesion;24 and “good governance and effective institutions” will bring about political stability.25

The three pillars of lasting peace refer again to the issue of social cohesion, trust and social capital. The rebuilding of relationships in post conflict settings is equally important as the rebuilding of infrastructure and institutions. The HLP’s targets in illustrative goal 11 have a sole focus on institutional capacity building framed by the rule of law. This narrow approach cannot alone foster peaceful societies. In an earlier report the UNSG underscores “A key challenge in post-conflict contexts is to overcome a pervasive deficit of trust – between different political parties and social groups, between the State and society and between the State and its international partners.”26

Young people and youth peacebuilding organisations are in a unique and strong position to lead the movement for the rebuilding of trust among social groups. Bound by common interests such as education, innovation, sport, a youthful culture and a desire for a stable world to grow up in, young people can be effective agents of bridging social capital.27 To be more effective agents of bridging social capital, young people need access to human rights and peace education. Peace education, including non-violent conflict transformation, intercultural dialogue and inclusive leadership, is paramount to achieving a culture of peace. Positive peace must compliment negative peace efforts. The omission of peace and human rights education in a broad goal on ensuring stable and peacef ul societies is a missed opportunity to rally resources, knowledge and youthful energy towards truly building sustainable peace.

At a recent workshop facilitated by UNOY Peacebuilders,28 several points, emphasised in italics, were suggested by participants to strengthen the targets of illustrative goal 11 of the HLP report:

a) Reduce violent deaths per 100 000 by x and eliminate all forms of violence against children including the creation of a caring environment

23 Ibid (53)
24 Ibid
25 Ibid (50)
b) Ensure justice institutions are accessible, independent, well-resourced and respect due process rights, while ensuring equitable traditional justice systems are also incorporated in situations of post conflict transitions

c) Stem the external stressors that lead to conflict, including those related to organized crime, in addition to internal stressors such as unemployment and political exclusion

d) Enhance the capacity, professionalism and accountability of the security forces, police and judiciary by mitigating corruption, providing adequate and context specific training, and eliminating impunity

Workshop participants noted that although hints of positive peace could be seen in the goal description – good governance, job security, long-term international cooperation – this was not reflected in the targets. Moreover, a gender perspective and the role of women in the peace and security agenda failed to be mentioned.

In an attempt to “recognise peace and good governance as core elements of well-being, not an optional extra”, peace has also been recognised as the first cross cutting issue in the HLP report. Labelled as such, peace is to be mainstreamed across all other goals, which include ending poverty (goal 1), empowering girls and women and achieving gender quality (goal 2), and providing quality education and lifelong learning (goal 3). This is a great step forward by the HLP, though active lobbying must ensure that peace remains present in all goals, and not side-lined among other issues. Examples of how to mainstream peace and peacebuilding in all goals, targets and indicators will be explored in detail in the report recommendations.

References to peace in the report of the UN Secretary General:

**Paragraph 2:** The world’s quest for dignity, peace, prosperity, justice, sustainability and an end to poverty has reached an unprecedented moment of urgency.

**Paragraph 3:** That vision, enshrined in the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) and rooted in the Charter of the United Nations, recognized the need to pool efforts as never before and to advance on three fronts simultaneously: development, peace and security, and human rights.

**Paragraph 81:** The key elements of the emerging vision for the development agenda beyond 2015 include ... (d) peace and governance, as key outcomes and enablers of development.

**Paragraph 95:** Build peace and effective governance based on the rule of law and sound institutions. Peace and stability, human rights and effective governance based on the rule of law and transparent institutions are outcomes and enablers of development. There can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Lasting peace and sustainable development cannot be fully realized without respect for human rights and the rule of law. Transparency and accountability are powerful tools for ensuring citizens’ involvement in policymaking and their oversight of the use of public resources, including to prevent waste and corruption. Legal empowerment, access to justice and an independent judiciary and universal legal identification can also be critical for gaining access to public services.

**Paragraph 120:** In so doing we must continue to listen to and involve the peoples of the world. We have heard their calls for peace and justice, eradicating poverty, realizing rights, eliminating inequality, enhancing accountability and preserving our planet. The world’s nations must unite behind a common programme to act on those aspirations. No one must be left behind. We must continue to build a future of justice and hope, a life of dignity for all.

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29 Op cit 20 (p9)
Peace as a crosscutting issue

The Panel strongly believes that conflict – a condition that has been called development in reverse – must be tackled head-on, even within a universal agenda. We included in our illustrative list a goal on ensuring stable and peaceful societies, with targets that cover violent deaths, access to justice, stemming the external causes of conflict, such as organised crime, and enhancing the legitimacy and accountability of security forces, police and the judiciary. But these targets alone would not guarantee peace or development in countries emerging from conflict. Other issues, like jobs, participation in political processes and local civic engagement, and the transparent management of public resources are also important. These countries should also benefit from a strengthened financing framework that allows resources to be allocated to those countries most in need.


Paragraph 95, the ‘peace’ paragraph, of the UNSG’s report, outlines the importance of building peace and effective governance based on the rule of law and sound institutions. Considering the omission of positive peace from the HLP report it is reassuring to find the SG’s report realises that “lasting peace and sustainable development cannot be fully realized without respect for human rights and the rule of law”. The rest of the paragraph does not, however, offer any actions on ensuring human rights are met and respected. Similar to the HLP report, references to peace remain framed around rule of law initiatives and those that prevent violence. There has not been an attempt to actively promote peace.

Young People

Just like the peace agenda, youth have a mixed role to play in both the HLP and SG’s reports. Firstly, in the HLP report, youth and young people are referred to 21 and 30 times respectively. Though frequently mentioned, especially in the development context of “young, dynamic populations”30, the enthusiasm towards young people is not adequately reflected in the universal goals or national targets.31 A few of these references, and some of their pitfalls, are discussed below.

Throughout the consultations, the HLP found that “Young people asked for education beyond primary schooling, not just formal learning but life skills and vocational training to prepare them for jobs...They want opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty.”32 We urge Member States, to go beyond this phraseology and acknowledge the explicit role of peace education and the importance of youth organisations in delivering the types of services and information young people want. Non formal education is a way to give young people the skills they need to embody peacebuilding rather than repeating it as an abstract concept.

Indeed, the illustrative goal on education encompasses the importance of learning beyond basic literacy and numeracy:

“Education should also encourage creative thinking, teamwork and problem solving. It can also lead people to learn to appreciate natural resources, become aware of the importance of sustainable consumption and production and climate change, and gain an understanding of sexual and reproductive health. Education supplies young people with skills for life, work and earning a livelihood.” 33

In this context human rights and peace education should be an obvious inclusion as knowledge and skills relevant for life, work and social cohesion. Human rights and peace education are akin to civic or moral education. Educating the next generations to lead a life free from violence should be a priority – if at the very least for the economic benefits this yields.

30 Ibid (p6)
32 Op cit 20 (p2)
33 Ibid (p37)
In the HLP report young most references to young people appear in illustrative goal 8 - to create jobs, sustainable livelihoods and equitable growth. UNOY Peacebuilders strongly welcomes this focus. A high rate of youth unemployment is one of the foremost issues affecting young people today.\(^{34}\) Prolonged unemployment affects young peoples ability to “to lead a fulfilling and productive life”\(^{35}\) and creates an environment conducive to social unrest. Under goal 8, the HLP proposes targets specific to:

b) decrease the number of young people not in education, employment or training by x%

d) Increase new start-ups by x and value added from new products by y through creating an enabling environment and boosting entrepreneurship.

In the spirit of mainstreaming peace as a crosscutting issue, the HLP and Member States must think carefully of how to link maxim people, planet, profit to peace. Going one step further to promoting social entrepreneurship in conflict affected or fragile states can be one means to do this. Social entrepreneurship attempts to solve or redress a problem in a community through a market-orientated mechanism. Social entrepreneurship could, therefore, be a means to create employment opportunities for youth, improve the livelihoods of small communities and facilitate processes of peacebuilding by addressing divisive issues in communities. It is important to remember also that employment opportunities for youth in fragile and conflict-affected states tend to be in the informal sector. Thus, any “economic transformation” proposed by the HLP report must take this into consideration. Attempts to immediately upscale or formalise working regulations, must be executed in an inclusive and holistic way.

Young people were also identified by the HLP report as a crosscutting issue. Specifically, issues of discrimination, marginalization, poverty and violence were identified as challenges young people face. Young peacebuilders work every day to empower youth to overcome these challenges. Again, a role for and need of young peacebuilders has been implied, but the structures and space for young peacebuilders to act has not been put in place. Similarly, the SG’s response does not refer to young people as stakeholder on issues of peace and security. Rather, the five references to young people place emphasis on job creation and education. While important, the limitations of this focus fail to promote active youth participation in social and political spheres, nor promote young people as agents of change.

Conversely, UNOY Peacebuilders welcomes the two references in the SG’s report to “not only formal schooling”\(^{36}\) and “life long learning opportunities”\(^ {37}\) for young people. Commonly referred to as non-formal education, learning outside the parameters of the traditional schoolyard is one of the most accessible educational forms for conflict-affected youth.

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Young people as a crosscutting issue

Today’s adolescents and youth are 1.8 billion strong and one quarter of the world’s population. They are shaping social and economic development, challenging social norms and values, and building the foundation of the world’s future. They have high expectations for themselves and their societies, and are imagining how the world can be better. Connected to each other as never before through new media, they are driving social progress and directly influencing the sustainability and the resilience of their communities and of their countries. These young people face many obstacles, ranging from discrimination, marginalisation, and poverty, to violence. They find it hard to find a first job, so we believe a jobs target with a specific indicator for youth employment, should be included in the next goal framework. Young people must be subjects, not objects, of the post-2015 development agenda. They need access to the right kind of health (including access to SRHR) and education to improve their job prospects and life skills, but they must also be active participants in decision-making, and be treated as the vital asset for society that they are.


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\(^{35}\) Op cit 20 (p46)

\(^{36}\) Op cit 21(Para 86)

\(^{37}\) Ibid (Para 25 & 86)
Today, 28 million adolescents living in conflict-affected environments remain outside formal education systems. Non-formal education affords these youth the space to continue learning when institutionalised education systems are interrupted. Moreover, they provide a space to learn different skill sets that may be more applicable in a certain time and space such as livelihood training, skills based learning, conflict transformation and peace education. Of course, non-formal education cannot replace the learning of formal education, but non-formal education methods must be acknowledged as an integral component to the life long learning opportunities of youth and young adults, most of all when it inspires peacebuilding skills towards one self and others.

Non-formal education is the foremost methodological tool adopted by youth organisations around the globe. It has been recognised by international corporations and intergovernmental organisations alike that youth lack information, networks and skills relevant to the workplace, but that youth groups provide an important space for the personal and professional development of young people. Considering also the universal scope of the post 2015 agenda, non-formal education including vocation and life skills training is relevant for young people worldwide.

Non-formal education
Non-formal and informal learning are important elements in the learning process and are effective instruments for making learning attractive, developing lifelong learning and promoting the social integration of young people. They encourage the participation, active citizenship and social inclusion of young people, and are of practical relevance to the labour market by helping to acquire knowledge, qualifications and other key skills.


Other reports

In addition to the reports of the HLP and UNSG, other reports on the post-2015 development agenda have been released. The World We Want, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and the UN Global Compact will be assessed in brief. All three reports underscore different important components of the new development agenda such as youth education, livelihood training and

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39 ManpowerGroup (2012), 'Wanted: Energized, career-Driven Youth', (2).
combating structural violence that leads to conflict. However, these agendas need to be strengthened by specific language that speaks to the need of young people in conflict and fragile states.

World We Want

Data from the World We Want on-line platform \footnote{MYWORLD (2013), * The United Nations Global Survey for a Better World* (Available at: http://www.myworld2015.org/) (Accessed on September 27th 2013)} provides unprecedented insight into the development objectives of citizens from around the world. The interactive results database enable for comparison across different themes, countries, gender and age groups. The most obvious conclusion to draw from the database is that among all countries, genders and ages, a good education was voted as the number one priority.

With interest in youth and peacebuilding we have examined the results from both males and females under 34 years old in some of the countries where UNOY Peacebuilders has members. From a total of 16 themes, of specific interest were the rankings on an honest and responsive government, and protection against crime and violence. The table below highlights the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>An honest and responsive government</th>
<th>Protection against crime &amp; violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>World</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What this data illustrates is that issues of governance and freedom from violence are important to young people around the world. The majority of the respondents ranked an honest and responsive government in their top 4 most important themes, with the table also showing that it was the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} most important issue for many respondents. Data on the importance of protection against crime and violence is a little more erratic. Though it can be said, in most cases, where an honest and responsive government is prioritised, the protection against crime and violence also becomes of greater significance to the respondents. It can also be suggested that if there is an honest and responsive government, then it would be anticipated that there would be protection from crime and violence.

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network

As the name suggests, the SDSN was mandated by the UNSG to create partnerships for sustainable development problem solving in local, national and regional contexts. UNOY Peacebuilders have
welcomed the SDSNs approach that “reaffirms the need to achieve sustainable development by promoting economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance including peace and security.”

In the SDSN’s report, in goal 1 that aims to end extreme poverty including hunger, target 1c specifically sets out to “Provide enhanced support for highly vulnerable states and Least Developed Countries, to address the structural challenges facing those countries, including violence and conflict”. While UNOY applauds efforts to address conflict and violence, the Member States must consider not only abolishing those structures conducive to violence, but also create the necessary structures and mechanism for processes of peacebuilding and state building. Creating infrastructures for peace that enhances the capacities for coordinated and diverse responses to conflict should be developed. According to UNDP, infrastructures for peace are “a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills held by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation; prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society.”

Goal 3, ensure effective learning for all children and youth for life and livelihood, is another welcomed goal of the SDSN. With the aim to ensure “all youth and adults have access to continuous lifelong learning to acquire functional literacy, numeracy and skills to earn a living though decent employment or self-employment,” UNOY Peacebuilders implores Member States to go one step further. Within this framework of lifelong learning, peace education must be considered as a tool in sustainable development. Recognition must also be given to non-formal education and the role of youth groups, who often take charge of these programs at the community level. In the context of sustainable livelihoods in conflict and fragile states, social entrepreneurship has to potential to address the urgent needs of a community through social innovation. With these important additions, goal 3 of the SDSN can be strengthened.

Finally, goal 4 on achieving gender equality, social inclusion and human rights for all, fails to recognise the needs of young people to achieve social inclusion. In the context of ending “discrimination and inequalities in public service delivery, the rule of law, access to justice and participation in political and economic life” it is paramount that youth are specifically targeted, rather than being categorised under “other status”. Youth participation in rule of law initiatives, access to justice and political and economical life, is critical to achieving legitimacy and sustainability in peacebuilding processes.

The UN Global Compact

The UN Global Compact reflects the UNSG’s aim to incorporate a business perspective into the development sector and to rally more structural resources to address some of the world’s greatest inequalities. Through programs of corporate social responsibility, businesses are encouraged to “catalyze actions in support of broader UN goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.” Businesses are, therefore, important stakeholders to consider in the post-2015 development agenda.

In June 2013, the Global Compact presented its report ”Corporate Sustainability and the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda”. In the design for sustainable development goals, the report calls for ‘quality education for all.’ Under this framework, “curricula at primary level and at all levels above to include sustainable development concepts, with special emphasis on business schools.”

Integrating a sustainable development curriculum into a formal school setting is a positive step, however to compliment the social justice aspect of the development agenda, we urge the Global Compact to consider the equal importance of mainstreaming peace and/or human rights education both in formal institutions and through non-formal education channels such as youth groups.

44 UN Global Compact. For more information see: http://business.un.org/en/entities/34
Chapter 3: A Case for Young Peacebuilders in the Post-2015 Agenda

From the previous chapters it has become clear that the MDG framework has been useful for involving youth in peacebuilding. This is the case especially for those youth who adopted a holistic approach to peacebuilding, one where peace is not only the absence of war but creating the conditions to promote stability through positive peace.

It has also been demonstrated in Chapter 2 that the proposed goals for the post-2015 agenda outlined by the HLP, UNSG and other stakeholders, fail to incorporate the needs youth involvement in peacebuilding. Youth in the UNOY Peacebuilders network expressed the need to include peace and peacebuilding both as a primary goal and as a crosscutting target. In total 96% of the respondents from the online questionnaire stated that peacebuilding should be a specific objective in the post-2015 development agenda.

Firstly, they point out that peace and development are closely related:
“Peacebuilding is absolutely vital to human security and although the process of peacebuilding arguably encompasses many of the MDG’s already, placing specific focus on it as an objective would place greater pressure (and possibly more accountability) on governments not to neglect or avoid any peacebuilding obligations and commitments” (Nive, Singapore).

For those living in a prolonged period of conflict, a peacebuilding goal is essential not only to their work, but also to their lives:
“Living in a country which suffered from a war about twenty years ago and which is now in on-going conflict and witnessing how a conflict can impact the development of the country and peoples lives, and also witnessing different conflicts all over the world, I think it is important to have such objective” (Anahit Chilingaryan, Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor, Armenia).

Not only does UNOY Peacebuilders advocate for peacebuilding to become a specific target under the peace and security goal, it strongly supports the notion of the HLP report to recognise peace as a cross cutting issue:
“I would even say that it (peace) needs to be mainstreamed through all the other goals to create and strengthen the culture of peace as a transversal issue that can be related to women empowerment, human rights, but also sustainable development and employment: understanding the value of conflict transformation, mediation, dialogue and conflict prevention in the issues that are affecting youth supporting them as active peacebuilders.” (Gracia Romeral Ortiz Quintilla, Fundació Catalunya Voluntària, Spain).

From an objective to action: what challenges do young peacebuilders face?
For an objective in the post-2015 agenda to be effectively implemented, it has to be translated into concrete and specific actions to which countries can commit themselves and can be held accountable by other stakeholders. The next step is to formulate clear indicators in order to be able to measure the progress over time and identify what does and what does not work. In order to enhance the impact of these actions, they should be closely linked to the needs of people on community level. Part of the objective of UNOY Peacebuilders consultation was, therefore, to identify the main challenges young peacebuilders and their peers face. Some were context specific but those mentioned here are widely shared by people from all over the world.

Youth un- and under-employment
Respondents listed a number of challenges they face and would like to see addressed in the post 2015 agenda. First, the issue of unemployment and poor job prospects, a theme picked up in both the HLP and UNSG reports, is hindering the creation of peaceful societies for youth all around the world. From Colombia to Nigeria, young people are daily affected by limited job opportunities. Natalia from
Colombia sees that the problem in her community is not limited to the lack of jobs, as there is also a gap between education and the jobs that exist. According to her, two things can now happen: there is no social mobility or youth accept illegal jobs. Mourine Okodoi from Kenya and Moses Iwuoha from Nigeria also point out the effects of high unemployment rates of young people:

“You are the majority yet they still lack job opportunities, thus, making them more vulnerable to poverty and crime. They can't feed themselves because they have no means of income. This has made crime rate so high in Kenya” (Mourine Okodoi, Centre for Legal Rights Education, Advocacy and Development, Kenya).

“You can see young people and graduates wandering around the streets looking for jobs. This can lead to the politicization of young people as they are used in elections. I do not want to say they are unenlightened, because I believe the youth are enlightened having been to University, they should be able to realize their dreams. (...) With the ever growing youthful population there is scramble for the few resources and opportunities that exist. There is also political manipulation for most unemployed youth. To solve this, youth must be involved in decision making, and programs that promote youth employment should be implemented” (Moses Iwuoha, Advocates for Youth and Health Development, Nigeria).

Education

In relation to education as a means to create peaceful societies, two issues were identified through the UNOY Peacebuilders’ consultation. Not only is there a gap between the knowledge and skills of young people and the job market, there is also a lack of peace education. Stereotyping, dehumanization, and fear of the ‘other’ or xenophobia are present in many societies. In recent years Europe has seen a rise in xenophobia and violence against migrants and refugees from outside Europe. Moreover, minority groups such as Roma and nationals from countries face discrimination. One young peacebuilder in Romania comments:

“If I would like to study abroad, I would feel discriminate because I am Romanian and this is badly considered in other parts of Europe/ the world. We are seen as bad people, people who steal, as dishonest people and this would be a great problem if I would like to study abroad as if I was not good enough because I come from Romania, an uneducated country that steals, not as Great Britain or other European countries.”

Participants of the focus group discussion in Georgia also spoke of the need of human rights education from a young age, integrated both into formal school curriculums and through non-formal education. Linked with a rise in xenophobia and entrenched protracted conflicts, there was an urgent need among participants that civil society and states must begin to address the dehumanising of the ‘other’. This can be achieved through greater peace and human rights education, focusing on intercultural dialogue, equality, anti-discrimination and dignity for all.

Intergenerational Conflict

Thirdly, in several countries a lack of intergenerational conflicts hinders the creation of a peaceful society. Young people feel excluded from (political) decision-making processes and lack ownership over societal processes. This process of exclusion manifests itself on different levels. The example used by Alexandra Mic from Romania illustrates that it can start in the classroom but extend as well to the political level:

“The main problem is in schools (...) students cannot discuss with teachers as they will be considered rude or disrespectful when their only purpose was to understand some of the decisions taken by the teacher. This is one of the main problems in my city: if youth speak up you (as youth) are considered rude and disrespectful. (...) Older generations consider that the goals of the youth are not real enough, like just being young and do not know nothing about life or work. You need to be over 30 to be considered seriously in your society. I am 18 and I can vote so I should also have the power to change things. But in practice we are not being heard.”

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Others, moreover, feel that they are not taken seriously, or their perspective does not count:

“The problem is that many of the young people are discouraged from participating in peace and development activities because they feel that they are looked down upon by the experts and older people in the field so they either become apathetic towards it or they choose extreme manners to convey their concern and desire to engage. Thus it is of utmost importance to guide their passion and energy through appropriate channels towards peace and development” (Afarin, United States of America, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars).

Alexandra goes on by saying:

“When you feel part of the decision taking process, you feel wanted, you feel listened to (...) This will help young people to become better adults. Young people have the energy, the spark, and want to do something (...) I am eager to volunteer even during my holidays. We want to help, we want to do things. The issue is that we do not know how to proceed.”

Inclusion of youth in processes of peacebuilding will lead to a generation of people who have the ability to voice their opinion in non-violent ways and are well prepared to help build a peaceful future for their country. In Kemper’s article on the role of youth in peacebuilding, she points out that “the failure to (re)integrate youth into civil structures cannot only put the peace-building process at jeopardy but also deprives these war-affected societies of a potential driving force for peace and development”. 47 If the void between current leaders including traditional, clan, political and/or religious leaders and the next generation is not properly filled, adverse groups will continue to have a space to propagate an agenda built on fear and violence.

**Good Governance**

Good governance, or lack thereof, is another structural limitation for young people to participate in the affairs of their country. The poor political will demonstrated by leaders, the lack of confidence in institutions, the lack of transparency, and the high level of corruption in many societies results in a strong sense of disillusionment among young people. Moses says:

“The problem that we have in the community is that the money that has been budgeted for the MDGs does not go to the people. The parties sometimes “hijack” money for their personal use. For example, in one small community in Nigeria, the MDGs investigated a health care facility and found that the money had been taken away from the community and the people in charge had obtained the money for their own self-interest. There must be accountability and corruption must be addressed, as corruption is no good to any nation.”

Natalia Pinilla from Colombia explains what happens to young people around her when they engage in social or political life:

“There is a lot of lack of confidence regarding institutions, because they have broken the ideals of young people. There needs to be transparency accepting that maybe they are doing things wrong. In social and civil life, youth don’t believe in networking, on doing things together. (...) There are different kinds of fears among youths in Colombia, but you can see it mainly regarding violence, fear that nothing is going to work and that nothing is going to change for the best, for their wellbeing and their families.”

**Sustainability**

Although not as prominent a topic, sustainability, particularly through the interplay between the environment, conflict and development, was also discussed by some participants. Moses comments:

“One of the greatest problems in Nigeria is the inability to have constant, 24 hour access to an uninterrupted power supply. For any given society to progress and achieve,

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there must be power. When there is power, businesses will flourish...at the moment, people have to use alternatives such as generators.”

Limited access to renewable energy resources and the constant interruption of electricity is not only damaging for economic development, it also can lower a communities moral. Arevik, a participant of a focus group discussion, articulated that waste management and ecology is a serious problem in Armenia, with the situation getting worse and the government taking little action. Another participant reflected upon the urgency of addressing limitless growth and creating sustainable cities. UNOY Peacebuilders recognises that the environment can be both a site of conflict, but also a potential avenue of peacebuilding: “natural resources and environmental issues can contribute to violent conflict underscores their potential significance as pathways for cooperation, transformation and the consolidation of peace in war-torn societies.” We call for greater efforts to promote sustainable environmental development in peacebuilding processes. Both are mutually reinforcing and thus should be reciprocally mainstreamed in both environmental and peacebuilding programs.

Conceptualisation of peacebuilding

Lastly, it was pointed out by several people that a narrow understanding of the concept of peace prevents young peacebuilders gaining legitimacy in their work:

“Young people in Europe wonder why they would have to work on peacebuilding if there are no armed conflicts taking place close to their homes. They relate it to other parts of the world, something far away from their homes. This makes it more difficult for us to involve young people as we lack legitimacy to justify what we do and why it is important also for them” (Ariadne Asimakopoulos, Upact, The Netherlands).

A global partnership as defined under MDG8 is based on cooperation and interaction between the global North and South. For it to become an equal partnership, it should be based not only on a sense of mutual solidarity but also a greater sense of universality. The expanding definition of the post-2015 agenda to be more universally encompassing, meaningful and relevant to people worldwide, will give more legitimacy to the work of young peacebuilders in Europe and around the world. Ariadne continues:

"The way development and peacebuilding is currently framed here and the consistently low involvement of people in the Netherlands is linked to peoples sense of ‘interconnectedness,’ the way they view their place in the world and their responsibilities towards others. A partnership should be built on global and local levels, involving all actors. On an individual level, people can for example turn to more sustainable consumption or governments can break down trade barriers. But if we want to succeed in this, we need to be able to reach to young people.”

As part of the online questionnaire, respondents were asked to select the three most important issues for themselves and their community.

**Good and accountable governance** was the first priority with 69% of respondents affirming it is important to them.

A **good education** closely followed on 66%.

A **culture of tolerance, inclusiveness and responsibility** was also recognised as a priority by 60% of young peacebuilders.

**Better job opportunities for young people** are highly important for 57% of the respondents.

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48UNEP (2009), *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment.* (p.5).
Young people are peacemakers

Throughout this report it has been identified that if young people continue to be excluded from processes of peace and security and if the needs of young people are continuously unaddressed, sustainable peace will not be achieved. Youth who are sidelined from political, social and economic development run the risk of being recruited into armed forces and, as the discourse suggests, may pose a threat to security. Moreover, a generation will slide into adulthood without having role models of neither active citizenship nor inclusive leadership. This line of argument, however, still frames young people as a 'problem' that needs to be solved.

Conversely, young people are a group with great transformative potential to bring development, peace and progress to countries. **The question begs: what is the added value of young peacebuilders in the implementation of the post2015 agenda and what role can they play?**

“Young people can make a huge change in the society they live in. They have enthusiasm, motivation and creative minds in promoting development. Young people can take lead in any development efforts. Young people can inspire others, involve in action and promote peace and development. Young people should be united to take, implement and monitor and evaluate new development goals” (Bhuvan Poudel, Jagriti Child and Youth Concern Nepal, Nepal).

All respondents agreed that young people should be involved in implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the post-2015 development agenda. While doing so, they can and should play a leading role in raising awareness among their peers about the post-2015 agenda. They can reach out to them and explain what the framework is about, how it affects their lives, and how young people can participate. When young people are trained as peacebuilders, they are not only independent active agents of social change; they can also train their peers. This creates a multiplying effect and a larger impact:

“It is crucial to empower youth, to strengthen their capacities and ensure they understand the importance of their civic engagement. In that sense, it is important to facilitate information to youth on how they can create their own innovative implementing actions” (Gracia Romeral Ortiz Quintilla, Fundació Catalunya Voluntària, Spain).

Another advantage of involving youth in the implementation of the post-2015 agenda is that they can exert influence over their peers:

“Using youth to preach peace can go a long way. When you see a fellow youth talking “my brother or my sister, stop violence, stop stealing, stop kidnapping, stop killing” that can make a difference. It will make more sense that a fellow youth is talking to you, rather than an elderly man” (Moses Iwuoha, AYHD, Nigeria).

**To build peaceful societies where people can coexist in harmony, we not only need young peacebuilders who actively engage in this objective. We need to establish a culture of peace, which is peace as a mind-set shared by society at large:**

“If people, if communities, if young generations are educated to live and promote a culture of peace where mutual respect and understanding of oneself, others and nature is a must, then the application of the post-2015 MDGs will have sustainable and fertile ground to thrive” (Paula Ramírez, Fundación Escuelas de Paz, Colombia).

Peace education is key to the promotion of a culture of peace. However, as previously discussed, it alarmingly remains outside the mandate of both the MDGs and current discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. Many respondents identified an important role for young people to play in this matter. Not only do they know how to talk to their peers, they also know how to make peace fun and interesting for young people. Innovative, non-formal education methods are very effective in reaching out to youth in schools, higher education and at community level:

“I think we are so successful in engaging young people in issues related to peace and conflict because we know how to relate to them. We use online tools and non-formal
education methods to involve them and to make them active global citizens who feel closely connected to peers worldwide.” (Ariadne Asimakopoulos, Upact, the Netherlands)

Moses Iwuoha, a participant of a Upact training reiterates how these events meaningfully impact young lives and contributes towards a global partnership:

“If trainings, such as this one, had not been conducted, they [youth participants] would not have known about what is happening in Nigeria. This training goes beyond Nigeria and African borders. We have been able to exchange ideas. We are training them to train others. Not everybody at this training event is based in the Netherlands. So the youth we are training now, will be able to train globally. Where there is peace there is development. How can peace be attained if there is no one to preach it?”

Lastly, young people have an important role to play in monitoring and evaluation of the post-2015 development agenda. Youth can be active in data collection and sharing of good practices and lessons learned. One of the major challenges is to make the voices of people at grassroots levels heard. Young peacebuilders can set up participatory frameworks for tracking progress and holding stakeholders accountable, reach out to and provide space for beneficiaries of programs and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and needs, and strengthen networks between youth and policy makers. Using new technologies and a language that speaks to young people, Sana says youth "can share suggestions, recommendation among their peers and community members, can also use social media to share, monitor and evaluate the new global goals" (Sana Sohail, Chanan Development Association Pakistan).

It will remain a major challenge, however, to build a continuous flow of information between different stakeholders and ensure evaluations feed in to effective policy and programs. Young people can play a part in this by creating innovative methods and instruments such as video, podcasts, and online tools or networks to track progress and collect data on progress towards the goals of the post-2015 development agenda.
Recommendations:

UNOY Peacebuilders’ consultation process has catalogued the experiences of peacebuilders at the local level in relation to the MDGs, the challenges they face in daily work and life, and their aspirations for the post-2015 development agenda. Supported by theoretical insight, this report makes a case for the inclusion of young peacebuilders in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This has resulted in six concrete recommendations to Member States on how the interests of youth and peacebuilders can be integrated in the post-2015 development agenda. Illustrative targets and indicators support these recommendations.

We urge member states to:
7. Include peacebuilding and targets for positive peace in a goal on peace and security in the post-2015 development agenda
8. Mainstream youth and peacebuilding among all future goals, targets and indicators in the post-2015 development agenda
9. Recognise and include young people as specific stakeholders in a goal on peace and security, noting that they are both affected by conflict and instrumental to peacebuilding
10. Recognise and include the role of youth led and youth based peacebuilding organisations in peacebuilding activities and promoting a culture of peace
11. Create a participatory monitoring framework that has built in mechanisms to ensure young people’s active participation in evaluating the post-2015 agenda.
12. Commit to funding resources and mechanisms for raising awareness and extending the outreach of the post-2015 agenda to all young people, especially to vulnerable or marginalised groups of young people.

Illustrative targets of how to include youth and peacebuilding in a global goal on peace and security. All targets are time bound by the deadline of the Post-2015 agenda (supposedly 2030).

Youth:
• Promote educational institutions as zones of peace and eliminate all attacks on schools and students by armed forces and aggressors
• Ensure that youth perspectives are given due consideration in decision making processes of local, national and international governance, especially on issues that affect them
• Include young people and youth organisations as key stakeholders in new global partnerships

Peace:
• Ensure that, all young people participate in peace and human rights education, either through formal or non-formal education
• Reduce violent conflict over natural resources
• Stem the internal stressors that lead to violent conflict including those related to youth unemployment and the political exclusion of young people

The indicators remain a working document and will be released as a supplement to this report in 2014.
Conclusion

Young peacebuilders are an under-recognised and undervalued stakeholder in global discussions on peace, conflict and security. The MDGs and current proposals for the post-2015 development agenda have failed to neither acknowledge nor include the perspective of the role of youth in peacebuilding. UNOY Peacebuilders’ post-2015 consultation and this, the ensuing report, attempts to leverage this gap by providing evidence in support of the inclusion of young peacebuilders in future development and sustainability agendas. This is premised on the idea that any attempt to ‘build peaceful societies’ cannot be achieved by excluding young people and omitting a positive peace approach.

Positively, the combined development and sustainability agenda beyond 2015 must and will move beyond a poverty paradigm to be more global in outreach. This paradigm shift must encompass the needs of all communities and all societies. However, while being more global, the goals need to relate to the needs of different communities, especially when related to peacebuilding. Including peace education or the promotion of peace through conflict transformation tools is not just pertinent to conflict or fragile states. In today’s world, one pervaded by growing intrastate conflicts, the growing movement of people, rising xenophobia, and challenges to democratic states, the values of non-violence, diversity, tolerance and equality need to be reaffirmed among young people and societies globally. 

**Peacebuilding is universally necessary and applicable – but the language needs to be adapted to time and place.**

Chapters 1 and 3 have presented powerful anecdotes of young peacebuilders from around the world. Their experiences and stories may be different, but they are united by a common goal to bring peace, stability and prosperity to their communities and countries. It has been shown that the MDG framework, moreover, has given meaning or legitimacy to the work of different youth groups. For young peacebuilders it is paramount that they too be afforded a recognised space and framework to operate in beyond 2015.

**Now is not the time to marginalise youth or young peacebuilders.** As the post-2015 development agenda becomes more economically orientated, the maxim of *people, planet, profit* needs to broaden its scope and consider peace. The matrix between youth un- or under-employment and violence must be recognised and addressed. A culture of social entrepreneurship and youthful innovation must be fostered to enable young people to be agents of change in their communities.

**Failing to include the role of youth in peacebuilding in the post-2015 development agenda will be a missed opportunity.** It will be a missed opportunity to secure a position for young people as peacebuilders for the next 15 years; in practical terms it will be an acute failure to secure sustainable funding for future youth-led programs in non-formal peace education; it will be a missed opportunity to include peace education as a paramount tool in the establishing peaceful societies; it will be a missed opportunity to promote a culture of peace as complementary to rule of law; and, above most, it will be a missed opportunity to forge new partnerships with youth peacebuilding organisations, that are willing and ready to build sustainable peace.
Appendix

UNOY Peacebuilders member organisations that participated in the consultation:

1. Afghans for Progressive Thinking, Afghanistan - http://www.apt.af
2. African Youth Relief Organisation, Benin
4. Center for Communication and Development, Bangladesh - www.ccdbd.org
10. Fundación Escuelas de Paz, Colombia - http://www.escuelasdepaz.co
17. Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania, Romania - http://www.patrir.ro
18. Students Against Destructive Actions and Decisions, Liberia
19. Upact, the Netherlands – www.upact.nl
23. Young Leaders Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone - http://www.ylsl.org
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