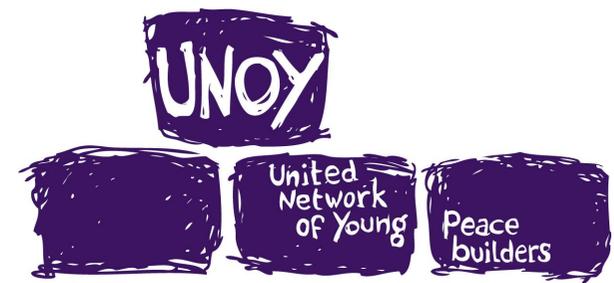


United Network of Young Peacebuilders

# Strategic plan 2016-2020



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# 1. Vision, mission and values

**Vision:** A world free from violence in which young people actively participate and lead in the peaceful transformation of conflicts and work towards cultivating a culture of peace.

**Mission:** UNOY Peacebuilders is a global network of youth peace organisations whose core work is rooted in a positive orientation towards conflict. We empower youth as actors in sustainable peace and conflict transformation through capacity development, advocacy and providing support spaces for cultivating a culture of peace.

**Core values and principles:** As a network, UNOY Peacebuilders shares common values and principles which guide our work. Our core values are based on a holistic understanding of peace as not merely the absence of war or direct violence, but also the presence of positive conditions that support physical, social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being.

- 1) **Nonviolence.** UNOY Peacebuilders opposes all forms of violence including physical, direct, social, cultural, environmental and structural violence. Violence impedes people from reaching their full potential. Violence is counterproductive in the transformation of conflict. Peace should be built through peaceful means. UNOY Peacebuilders members work nonviolently at all times.
- 2) **Conflict transformation.** UNOY Peacebuilders understands that conflicts are a natural fact of human societies and can be opportunities for change.
- 3) **Meaningful youth participation.** Young people are agents for positive change. Youth are not merely victims or perpetrators of violence or beneficiaries of peacebuilding initiatives. They are stakeholders and actors who positively contribute to peacebuilding and conflict transformation.
- 4) **Diversity and solidarity.** UNOY Peacebuilders embraces diversity, appreciates the richness in our differences, and believes in the importance of equality and inclusion of young people and other marginalised groups in peacebuilding processes. UNOY Peacebuilders believes in the power of solidarity, sharing successes and challenges, and working together as a community of locally-grounded and globally-aware youth.
- 5) **Sustainability.** For sustainable peace to flourish, humans must strive to be conscious of the impact of their actions and strive towards sustainability. This includes impact on the environment, on other people, on societies and on cultures. This also means that our peacebuilding efforts should be sensitive and adapted to the context we work with, and that the principle of doing no harm is taken into account in all our activities.

## 2. Introduction

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a global network of youth peace organisations, with a secretariat in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Since being founded in 1989, UNOY Peacebuilders has grown and developed from a loose network of individuals working on youth and peacebuilding to become a structured network of youth peace organisations. As of 2015 the network has approximately 60 member organisations from 45 countries in Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia and the MENA region. The International Secretariat in The Hague coordinates and implements joint network activities within the scope of this strategic plan and speaks on behalf of the network, advocating for youth participation in issues of peace and security. The International Steering Group, consisting of representatives of member organisations elected on a regional basis, guides the overall strategic direction of the network on behalf of the members and oversees the work of the International Secretariat. Additionally a board has legal oversight over the International Secretariat, which formally operates as a foundation registered in the Netherlands.

As a network, we facilitate the development of young people's capacities to participate in and lead conflict transformation processes and to raise their voices in dialogue with policymakers on topics of peace and security. We also work to strengthen the capacities of our member organisations by learning from each other and sharing good practice. Through our capacity development activities, we ensure the sustainability of the youth peace movement.

UNOY Peacebuilders also works to bring the voices and experiences of young peacebuilders to the attention of global policy makers through the Youth Advocacy Team and representation at the United Nations in Geneva and New York. We urge policy-makers to recognise the importance of youth participation in peacebuilding and to see this as an integral part of shaping policies which foster peace. Through our work representing young people towards UN bodies such as the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council and participating in groups such as the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding we have built up a strong reputation for expertise on the topics of youth and peacebuilding. Among other things, we have contributed to the development of the Guiding Principles on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding, facilitated the drafting and development of the Amman Youth Declaration and played a leading role in the development of the Youth Action Agenda to Prevent Violent Extremism.

This strategic plan lays the foundation for our network activities for the period 2016-2020, during which we will continue to build on the work we have done over the past years in advocating for youth participation in peacebuilding and in developing the capacities of young people and youth organisations. The strategic plan was developed in 2014-2015 through an open and inclusive process in partnership between member organisations, the International Steering Group, the Board and the International Secretariat.

### 3. Context

To achieve sustainable peace, peacebuilding processes must be transformative and create space for a diverse set of actors – including, but not limited to, young people, women, victims and marginalized communities; community and religious leaders; civil society actors; refugees and internally displaced persons – to participate in public decision-making.

Young people’s leadership and roles in transforming conflict, preventing violence, radicalisation and extremism are not adequately capitalized upon. Ensuring the active, systematic, and meaningful participation of youth in issues of peace and security is a demographic and democratic imperative. It is also a way of preventing armed conflict. Social exclusion is an important factor in triggering relapses into violent conflict. On the other hand, participation in decision making supports young people’s resilience in the face of social pressures, contributing to the development of a sense of belonging.

A dichotomous viewpoint of youth in relation to violent conflict is very common, portraying youth as either perpetrators or victims of violence. The narrative of violent extremism is an example of this, where youth are viewed as potential violent extremists, accompanied by claims that youth are susceptible to being “radicalised” by their seniors. This narrative places youth in a position of both victims and perpetrators of violence. It calls for a policy response where young people are seen as both a risk to be contained through measures countering and preventing violent extremism and as victims to be saved from radicalisation. However, it overlooks young people’s agency as potential peacebuilders in their own communities and creates policy frameworks which do not make use of young people’s power for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

There must be a shift from distraction to interaction and from passive to participatory partnerships. This shift needs to alter the perception of youth as sources of conflict to seeing them as sources for peace and development, and from asking them to wait to asking them to lead the way. Young people need to be included as partners for peace..

Fortunately, the recognition of the active roles young people can and must play in all social processes is slowly gaining ground. As this strategic plan is being written, the UN Security Council has held its first thematic debate on youth, peace and security which was followed up by the Global Forum on Youth Peace and Security culminating in the Amman Youth Declaration. At the same time, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 provides an opportunity to re-focus our attention, and

mobilize action towards sustainable development. More specifically, Goal 16 calls for the importance of participatory and representative decision making processes as a means to build inclusive and peaceful societies. These processes must necessarily include youth.

Together with youth organisations themselves, non-youth NGOs are leading the way in recognising the role of youth in building peace. Institutions such as the United Nations also acknowledge the need to see youth as partners in their work, rather than subjects of their work. However, most policy makers at local, national and international levels remain rooted in a mindset of youth as a problem to be solved rather than a resource to be included, a stakeholder to engage and a partner to work with.

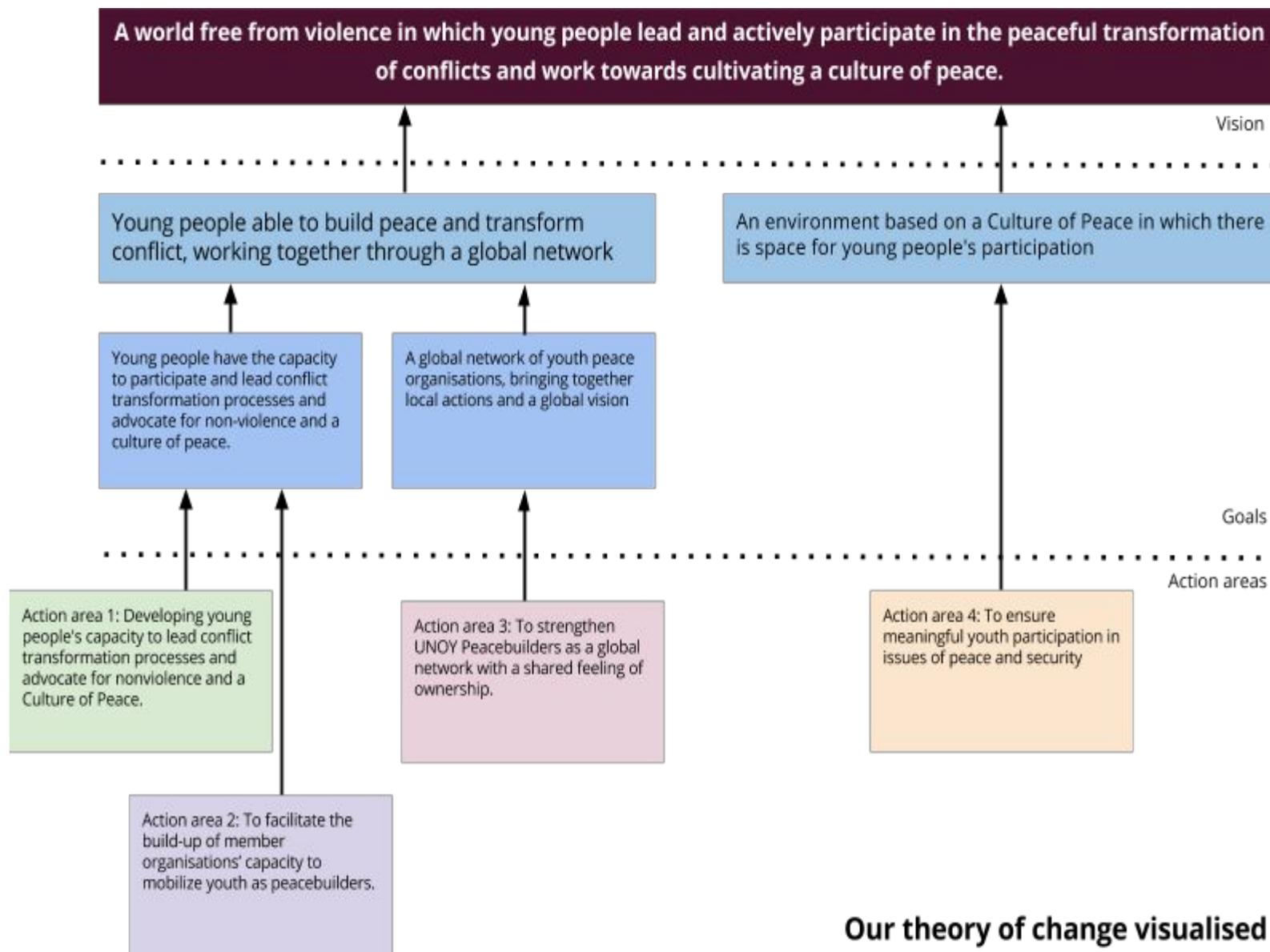
As a global network of youth peace organisations, UNOY Peacebuilders is an interlocutor linking together two broad and important themes: Youth and peacebuilding. We bring the voices of youth to policy makers, demonstrating the role that young people play as positive agents for peaceful change and support young people and youth organisations in fulfilling this role.

## 4. Our Theory of Change

UNOY Peacebuilders' vision is of a world free from violence in which young people lead and actively participate in the peaceful transformation of conflict and work towards cultivating a culture of peace.

Many young people are open to change, future-oriented, idealistic and innovative. They dare to take risks to improve their situation and are knowledgeable about their peers' realities. Organized youth, such as the members of UNOY Peacebuilders, play a central role in mobilizing young people for peace and thereby in building peaceful communities. By working with young people in multiplier positions, key individuals who are well placed to disseminate knowledge and experiences including within youth organisations, we ensure that the impact of our joint activities is felt throughout the youth peace movement at large.

UNOY Peacebuilders sees youth as important agents of change in working towards a world free from violence and a culture of peace. Their contributions should be actively supported, solicited and regarded as essential to building peaceful communities. Youth influence international policy and practice on peacebuilding, encouraging enabling environments for peacebuilders working at the local, national and regional levels all over the world. In order for young people to play such an active role, youth peace organisations need to link with each other in a global network for peacebuilding and the wider environment must facilitate for young people's participation. By strengthening the capacities of youth peacebuilding organisations we aim to empower them to be even more effective in the work they do locally and thereby also strengthen the global voice of young people working for peace.



## **Goal 1. Young people able to build peace and transform conflict, working together through a global network**

An integral part of UNOY Peacebuilders' vision is that young people should lead peacebuilding efforts, moving from a culture of violence towards a culture of peace and transforming conflicts locally as well as globally. We believe that without youth as active stakeholders, any peace will be unsustainable given the large proportion of youth in the global population and young people's frequent drive for change. For young people to be able to play an active role in building peace, they must be supported to ensure they have the capacities to work on these topics. It is also necessary for capable young people working locally to link up and have a common platform and voice internationally, as by doing so youth are able to have a wider and more effective reach than when only acting locally.

### **Sub-goal 1.1 Young people have the capacity to participate and lead conflict transformation processes and advocate for non-violence and a culture of peace.**

Young people have the capacity to change their societies. However, by their very nature youth also often have limited experience and connections and do need to be actively supported in developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to effectively work for peace.

Organisational sustainability is of particular concern when it comes to youth organisations. Financial and human resources are often in short supply. Without adequate financial support, it is impossible for youth organisations to take a long-term and strategic approach to build peace. When youth organisations are not sustainable, knowledge and experience easily gets lost and it becomes very difficult for youth to contribute in an effective manner to social change.

Similarly, young people need to be supported in developing their skills related to conflict transformation and in advocating for peace to do effective work locally as well as globally. More than any other age group, young people on average have limited practical experiences and so it is all the more important that they have opportunities to share their experiences and learn from each other on a peer-to-peer level, creating a social ripple effect and providing leadership to both other youth and non-youth.

In order to meet these objectives, we take action in two areas: We facilitate the build-up of organisational capacity among our members and we develop young people's individual capacities so that they can act for conflict transformation and raise their voices to policy makers.

**Action area 1: To facilitate the build-up of member organisations' capacity to mobilize youth as peacebuilders.**

As a global network of youth organisations, we face common organisational challenges related to issues such as fundraising, organisational learning and assessing the impact of our work. For the network to be as strong as possible, we work together on strengthening each other's organisational capacity through activities coordinated by the International Secretariat and International Steering Group as well as through activities implemented by member organisations in direct cooperation with each other.

The International Secretariat will organise trainings related to organisational capacity, including online trainings, with a particular focus on fundraising and specific regional concerns. The secretariat will also, in cooperation with member organisations, disseminate toolkits, manuals and other practical resources for member organisations' development.

Member organisations contribute directly to the implementation of this action area by peer-to-peer communication in shared online spaces managed by the IS where all members can share opportunities, knowledge etc. with other members, which can directly influence the organisational capacity of members.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Responsible
Member organisations are able to act more effectively and learn from each other by pooling tools and resources	Develop tools and resources aimed at strengthening organisation's capacities based on needs as identified through the Annual Impact Review	Annually from 2017: At least a third of member organisations indicate in the Annual Impact Review that in the past year they have made use of resources developed jointly by the network.	IS, Member organisations

	Maintain online tools and mechanisms to enable member organisations' to share tools and resources		
Increase the number of member organisations which are financially sustainable	<p>Online training courses for member organisations supporting funding proposal development</p> <p>Build bridges between member organisations and donors and disseminate funding opportunities</p>	<p>2017: At least 50% of member organisations who indicate a need for fundraising support indicate that they have received this from the International Secretariat.</p> <p>2020: Annual Impact Review should demonstrate an increased overall success ratio for funding applications among member organisations, in particular those which have reported problems with financial sustainability in the past.</p>	IS, members

**Action area 2: Developing young people's capacity to lead conflict transformation processes and advocate for nonviolence and a culture of peace.**

By changing the lens through which young people understand conflict, we can open new opportunities for sustainable change by learning how to creatively and constructively deal with conflict in a way that helps us develop as individuals and communities.

With understanding conflict comes the need to develop skills and competences to be able to deal with and transform it, for young people to act as agents for conflict transformation. Young people also need to be able to voice their opinions and concerns in peacebuilding, and highlight and give visibility to their experience and contributions in the field. Through developing their capacities as advocates for peace, young peacebuilders share existing tools and resources on advocacy, learn from each other's experiences on the ground, and improve strategies for effective advocacy for peace as a collective.

We aim to empower young peacebuilders through a continuous learning process in the field of conflict transformation and peace advocacy, so that they may be able to lead social change at all levels of society.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Responsible
Young people have capacities to work on conflict transformation	<p>Conflict transformation trainings for youth multipliers in all regions of the network, particularly trainings of trainers, implemented in partnership with member organisations</p> <p>Develop training modules on peacebuilding and conflict transformation for use in local context</p>	<p>2017: At least 600 young people annually over the last two years have increased their competences in training their peers in topics related to peacebuilding and conflict transformation</p> <p>2020: At least 50% of participants in UNOY Peacebuilders trainings have implemented more than one multiplier trainings in two years after their participation, as indicated in the annual participant's survey</p>	IS, member organisations

<p>Youth have capacities to advocate for non-violence and a culture of peace</p>	<p>Trainings on youth advocacy for non-violence and a culture of peace</p>	<p>2017: Representatives of at least one third of member organisations have participated in a training of advocates in the past two years</p> <p>2017: At least 75% of the participants in the UNOY youth advocacy trainings have increased their competences in advocating for non-violence and a culture of peace, as indicated in the evaluations forms of the trainings and in the annual participant's surveys.</p> <p>2020: At least 75% of participants in advocacy trainings have actively engaged in advocacy at the local, national, regional or global level, as indicated in the annual participant's survey</p>	
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**Sub-goal 1.2 A global network of youth peace organisations, bringing together local actions and a global vision**

Violence is a global phenomenon. Countering violence and cultivating peace must therefore also be approached in a global manner. Young people and youth organisations need to be able to act globally and to cross internal and external borders in order to effectively address the challenges of violence. Global cooperation between youth peace organisations strengthens local actions. By working within a global network, youth peace organisations can share knowledge and information and assist each other on a peer-to-peer basis to improve the effectiveness of each organisations' local activities.

Not only is it necessary to approach topics such as violence at a global level, it is also important to make use of synergies between youth civil society in different locations working on similar topics. Through their participation in a global network, young peacebuilders have the opportunity to meet, learn from and cooperate with their peers, creating possibilities for more effective peacebuilding.

In order to meet the objective of a global network of youth peace organisations which brings together local actions and a global vision, we undertake actions to strengthen UNOY Peacebuilders as a global network.

**Action area 3: To strengthen UNOY Peacebuilders as a global network with a shared feeling of ownership.**

As a global network of youth peace organisations, UNOY Peacebuilders draws its strengths at the local, national, regional and global levels through the work of its members. Members of the network are independent and focus on diverse areas of peacebuilding including human rights, conflict transformation, gender equality, environmental sustainability and children’s and women’s rights. This makes it vital to ensure that the members have a shared sense of being a community.

This sense of community and joint ownership of the network is achieved by effective communication and representation mechanisms. Face-to-face networking opportunities are important to foster network cohesion and enable young peacebuilders to work together, relate to and support each other. Clear regional representational mechanisms enable UNOY Peacebuilders to act as a global network and the International Steering Group ensures accountability between member organisations and the International Secretariat.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Responsible
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<p>Members have a sense of ownership over UNOY Peacebuilders</p>	<p>Member organisations featured on UNOY Peacebuilders' online channels</p> <p>Regional networking activities or networking meet-ups</p> <p>Regional online meetings, coordinated by ISG members</p>	<p>2017: A majority of member organisations actively participate in regional online meetings</p> <p>2017: Regional network activities have been organised in at least two regions</p> <p>2017: Member organisations indicate a sense of community with other members in the Annual Impact Review</p> <p>2020: Regional network activities have been organised in at least five regions over the past 3 years</p>	<p>IS, ISG</p>
<p>Members are able to interact and collaborate on a bi- or multilateral basis in addition to activities coordinated by the secretariat</p>	<p>Joint project development and implementation, especially at the regional level</p> <p>Development of a database of members available to all member organisations, including information on each organisation's potential contributions to the network</p>	<p>2017 and 2020: A majority member organisations collaborate with other members, as indicated by the Annual Impact Review</p>	<p>ISG, Members</p>

<p>UNOY Peacebuilders is an open and democratic network.</p>	<p>Annual elections of regional ISG representatives, with half the ISG members elected each time</p> <p>ISG expanded to a minimum of 10 members by 2020 simultaneously to a review of network regions</p> <p>Annual Impact Review implemented as a way for ISG and IS to understand needs of members</p>	<p>2017 and 2020: At least 75% of member organisation's indicate that UNOY Peacebuilders is an open and democratic network in the Annual Impact Review</p> <p>2017 and 2020: At least 75% of members indicate that they feel that they are able to influence network developments and activities in the Annual impact Review</p> <p>Annually 2016-2020: At least 75% of member organisations in each region participate in ISG elections for their region</p>	<p>IS, ISG</p>
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**Goal 2. An environment based on a culture of peace in which there is space for young people's participation**

A culture of violence is prevalent globally. This hinders young people's full social participation and limits young people in achieving their potential or their goals. For young people to be able to act for peace and work towards a world free from violence, an environment is required which enables young people to play such an active and meaningful role. A culture of peace is a core feature of such an enabling environment. No less important is the recognition of young people as legitimate stakeholders in all aspects of society, including those of peace and conflict.

Infrastructure and institutions need to acknowledge the needs and aspirations of youth to ensure meaningful youth participation in peacebuilding processes, and to offer meaningful avenues for young people to shape the future of their countries. In order to lead and participate in conflict transformation and working towards a world free from violence, young people must be recognised and acknowledged as legitimate stakeholders by other actors. This recognition needs to be both formal and informal, it needs to be reflected in formal policy documents as well as in the attitudes of policymakers and other stakeholder groups.

In order to foster the creation of this environment, we take action in ensuring meaningful youth participation in issues of peace and security.

#### **Action area 4: To ensure meaningful youth participation in issues of peace and security**

UNOY Peacebuilders brings the voices of young peacebuilders to the attention of international policy-makers, advocating for increased youth participation in issues of peace and security, and a culture of peace. All our advocacy activities fall under one of these two topics, while recognizing that there are a number of cross-cutting issues. Our advocacy is knowledge-driven and built on evidence collected through research in collaboration with a variety of partners. The focus of our advocacy work is towards the United Nations, as resolutions and policies developed at the UN set a global standard for peace and development and an international policy framework on youth, peace and security is vital to keep national governments and other actors accountable towards young people.

UNOY Peacebuilders works to enable young people to engage in an active and positive way in policy making related to peacebuilding and conflict transformation. This also requires young people to have spaces to come together, critically examine their own worldviews and approaches, think creatively about conflicts, and work together to shape a youth voice on peacebuilding.

In addition to the joint activities at the global level, member organizations individually and in smaller groupings are crucial to successful local, national and regional advocacy. Most UNOY Peacebuilders members are engaged in advocating for peace locally, and significant numbers of members work at both national and regional levels to make the voices of young peacebuilders heard. The International Secretariat supports regional-level advocacy by facilitating coordination among member organisations

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Responsible
<p>Adoption of internationally politically binding agreements recognising and supporting youth in transforming conflict, preventing and countering violence and building sustainable peace</p>	<p>Advocate UN member states for politically binding agreements recognising and supporting youth in transforming conflict, preventing and countering violence and building sustainable peace</p> <p>Advocate for the development of regional policies recognising and supporting youth participation in peacebuilding, and the regional adoption of international agreements policies</p> <p>Maintain dialogue with key partners including UN agencies, other intergovernmental bodies, international NGOs, key governments and others</p> <p>Participate in major international events and working groups relating to peacebuilding</p>	<p>2017: A Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security approved</p> <p>2017: The UN Peacebuilding Commission includes a youth lens in its work, including youth participation in the formulation of policy and strategic direction of UN peacebuilding bodies</p> <p>2017: A funding mechanism accessible by youth-led initiatives for youth participation in peacebuilding has been set up within the UN system</p> <p>2020: Key regional intergovernmental bodies have committed to the implementation of international agreements on youth participation in peacebuilding</p> <p>2020: Funding mechanisms to support youth participation in peacebuilding have been set up by key regional intergovernmental bodies</p>	<p>IS, YAT.</p>

<p>Member organisations able to actively participate in advocacy at local and national levels</p>	<p>Development of toolkits or guidelines for advocacy</p> <p>Trainings on youth advocacy, as previously indicated in Action Area 2 of this strategic plan</p> <p>Member organisations supporting each other's advocacy through participation in regional working groups</p>	<p>2017: At least one third of member organisations indicate that they have the capacities to implement advocacy at the local and/or national levels</p> <p>2020: A majority of member organisations participate in policy processes at the local, national or regional level on youth participation in peacebuilding</p>	
<p>Strengthen youth voice towards a global culture of peace</p>	<p>Participate in international policy discussions related to a culture of peace</p> <p>Work with other stakeholders in negotiating for increased youth voice to be reflected in international policy documents</p>	<p>2017 : Policy documents on youth and peacebuilding include a reference to a culture of peace</p>	<p>Advocacy reps, IS</p>
<p>Increase the knowledge base on youth participation in peacebuilding</p>	<p>Gather and disseminate stories of young people active as peacebuilders</p> <p>Participate in international research activities on youth and peacebuilding</p>	<p>2017: Stories of young people building peace form a basis of UNOY Peacebuilders' advocacy message</p> <p>2020: All UNOY Peacebuilders advocacy strategies and documents are backed up by and firmly rooted in evidence and</p>	<p>IS</p>

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## 5. Implementation and monitoring

The implementation of this strategic plan will be further elaborated in annual plans, detailing the activities of UNOY Peacebuilders each year. Each annual plan will be monitored through an annual report published the following year. Additionally, an Annual Impact Review conducted annually among members of UNOY Peacebuilders will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the various activities implemented annually.

Annual activity reports and Annual Impact Review reports will be used to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan. In 2018, the implementation of the strategic plan will be evaluated and a mid-term report will be compiled with an overview of progress towards the indicators for 2017 defined as defined above. During this evaluation we will also reflect, update and add to the milestones and indicators planned for 2020. In 2021, we will evaluate the overall implementation of the strategic plan with a view to the indicators defined above for 2020.