Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook

By Erike Tanghøj and João Felipe Scarpelini

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The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development.

FBA supports international peace operations and international development co-operation. The agency conducts training, research and method development in order to strengthen peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict and post-conflict countries. We also recruit civilian personnel and expertise for peace operations and election observation missions led by the EU, UN and OSCE.

The agency is named after Count Folke Bernadotte, the first UN mediator.

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Foreword

Never before in history have there been so many young people on the planet[1]. The possibility of these young women and men to exercise their human rights and be part of the decisions that shape our societies today is crucial for the future of all of us. Despite that, young women and men are often excluded and their voices are rarely listened to.

Violence and conflict are pressing issues for many of these young women and men, directly impacting their lives and their communities. Estimates suggest that about 408 million young people (aged 15–29) live in settings affected by armed conflict or organized violence – meaning that one in every four young persons in the world has experienced or been affected by violence or armed conflict in one way or another.[2]

Therefore, a very important cornerstone for reaching sustainable peace and security is to ensure that young people have the rights, tools and opportunities, to participate in a meaningful manner in statebuilding and peacebuilding processes.

The Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda, provides a framework that recognizes the positive impact and important contributions from young women and men. It urges global actors like the UN, OSCE and EU, as well as state actors like the Folke Bernadotte Academy, to invest in, and create space, for youth and youth organizations – so they too can play a part in shaping new and peaceful societies.

The FBA have been working with the YPS Agenda since 2018; focusing on policy and method development as well as capacity building in order to contribute to the operative readiness of our international

partners. Here, the institutionalization of the YPS Agenda is a central objective to ensure that core principles become an integral part of everyday operations, practises and behaviours – and not only materialized into so-called 'siloed' youth projects.

The role of YPS Advisers as such is instrumental in realizing sustainable change and operationalizing the YPS Agenda. Through the FBA, Sweden is proud to be one of the first countries to deploy YPS advisers to the field, stationed with our partners where the actual work takes place.

It is our belief that this is key in order to achieve a mainstreamed awareness and action, since these professionals provide new insights and useful expertise on how to integrate a conflict sensitive youth perspective into operations, missions, strategies and analyses.

This publication contributes to the same effort. It is primarily designed to give hands-on support to YPS advisers working with our partners in the UN, OSCE and EU. However, I hope that the advice given in the following chapters will also serve to support the work of YPS focal points more broadly in their different arenas and in their networks.

YPS advisers are constantly breaking new, exciting and challenging grounds. Our aim with this handbook as we like to call it, is to extend a hand to hold in the field for these professionals, and to help anyone who chooses to work with this very important aspect of peacebuilding wherever they decide to do so.

Sven-Eric Söder
Director General of FBA

Acknowledgements

1. Why a handbook for Youth, Peace and Security Advisers?

The growing recognition of young people as a positive force in preventing and resolving conflict, preventing extremism and building sustainable peace has gained momentum with the adoption of the UN Security Council (SC) resolutions 2250 (2015)[3], 2419 (2018)[4] and 2535 (2020)[5] on Youth, Peace and Security.

The first resolution, SC resolution 2250, marked a fundamental shift at the policy level in the understanding of who young people are. It also signified the importance of enabling their meaningful participation and the positive role(s) young women and young men play in the maintenance of peace and security.

Since then, YPS has developed into a comprehensive agenda that aims to enable, support and increase young people's agency with regard to peace and security matters and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making.

The operationalization of the YPS Agenda, however, still needs to be strengthened with appropriate levels of resources, technical capacity and political commitment.

Nevertheless, the number of international missions, organizations and programmes with YPS-related mandates has consistently increased in the past five years. This is especially due to the growing recognition that young people's participation is an integral part of the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

This expansion created the need for strengthened institutional capacity and specialized YPS practitioners and thematic experts to help turn the YPS Agenda into action. The need to strengthen field capacity is highlighted in SC resolution 2535 (2020) which calls upon Member States and United Nations entities to ensure dedicated capacities are allocated to YPS implementation and encourage the appointment of dedicated YPS focal points.

As the demand for qualified YPS experts is increasing, it is important to understand what kind of professional knowledge and skills are needed to accelerate YPS implementation. Despite the wealth of available policy frameworks, reports and guidance notes, there is a lack of clarity about the role of a YPS adviser or focal point and how this role may differ from traditional youth specialist roles.

This handbook seeks to provide such guidance. The overall objective of the handbook is to enhance the effectiveness and impact of YPS advisers, contribute to operational readiness and accelerate the implementation of the YPS Agenda in diverse contexts. It has been developed aiming to prepare and support YPS advisers and focal points working in different settings within the structures of the:

• United Nations (UN),
• European Union (EU), and the
• Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The handbook is, however, equally relevant to YPS professionals working for other global, regional and national structures. It presents interesting entry points and perspectives for those working on other interlinked agendas and issues.

This handbook will not provide ready-made or tailored solutions. Instead, it will provide examples and suggest points of departure from which the Adviser can develop their own appropriate and unique actions and approaches.

The handbook provides:
• an introduction to the YPS Agenda and its key frameworks and principles,
• an overview of the role of the YPS Adviser and its different possible attributions and responsibilities,

- a comprehensive outline of the core tasks and functions that can be associated with the role of the YPS Adviser.

The handbook is based on interviews and discussions with former and current practitioners working with YPS matters within the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the FBA. For this reason, many examples highlighted in this handbook are taken from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Kosovo[*6] and Somalia.

2. The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda

Building on decades of youth-driven activism and advocacy work, the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda represents an important shift in the understanding of young people and their agency in peace and security issues around the world.

The YPS Agenda is centred on the recognition that **young peoples' meaningful participation and influence in peace and state building processes is a right as much as an asset that can improve the relevance, effectiveness and impact of peace and security initiatives, policies and decisions.**

The YPS Agenda represents a unique opportunity for peace and security efforts. Sustainable peace will not be possible unless young women and young men are represented in political life, have a say in political dialogue, reconciliation, peacebuilding and statebuilding processes, and have a true stake in deciding their own future.

At the centre of the YPS Agenda are the United Nations Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020).

- **SC Resolution 2250**, unanimously adopted in 2015, recognized for the first time "the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security". It identified five pillars for action and requested the Secretary-General to carry out a progress study on the youth's positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution.

- **SC Resolution 2419**, adopted in 2018, specifically calls for the meaningful inclusion of young women and men in formal and informal peace processes.

- **SC Resolution 2535**, adopted in 2020, provided concrete steps for the operationalization of the YPS Agenda, which included a request for the strengthening of technical YPS capacity.

Although the agenda continues to progress and develop further, it is common to refer to the "five pillars" of the YPS Agenda as outlined in SC Resolution 2250, which are:

participation of young people in peacebuilding and conflict resolution;

protection of human rights, young civilians and young peacebuilders and activists;

prevention of violence, and the promotion of a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue;

partnerships to increase political, financial and technical support for youth participation and youth-led action;

disengagement and reintegration of young people affected by conflict.

In addition to the framework created by the Security Council resolutions, other key documents have contributed to shaping the YPS Agenda further.

The independent progress study "The missing peace"[7] (2018), requested by the Security Council in Resolution 2250, has debunked some of the stereotypes and policy myths associated with young people. Consequently, the report provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by young women and men and how to address the "violence of exclusion[8]".

The study urges governments to replace hard security and reactive approaches towards youth with a more comprehensive and dynamic prevention and empowerment approach. The report also provided concrete evidence on the positive impact young people have on peace and security and provided clear recommendations for including, investing and partnering with young people in order to ensure a peace dividend.

Meanwhile, the global policy paper "We are here"[9] (2019), commissioned by the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, looked at different examples to identify hindrances and opportunities for meaningful youth participation in formal peace processes. The report concluded that young people's proximity to the negotiation table matters. A multi-layered approach to realize youth participation should therefore be adopted, including the support to youth engagement "in the room", "around the room" and "outside the room"[10].

The YPS Agenda also builds on and reinforces other Security Council resolutions and important global agendas such as the:

• Sustaining Peace Agenda[11],
• 2030 Agenda[12], and the
• Women, Peace and Security Agenda[13], to name a few.

Taken together, these represent a move away from siloed peace and security responses to collective, integrated, whole-of-system approaches that combine humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts which help develop the resilience needed for societies and institutions to thrive.

In addition, distinct entities may have entity-specific frameworks, overlapping agendas and operational guidance. Some examples include:

UNITED NATIONS

- United Nations Youth Strategy – Youth 2030
- Report of the Secretary-General on Youth, Peace and Security (S/2020/167)

EUROPEAN UNION

- EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027
- European Consensus on Development (2017)
- European Council conclusions on youth in external action (2020)

OSCE

- OSCE Commitments on Youth and Security Education, including the Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts (MC.DOC/3/18)

AFRICAN UNION

- African Youth Charter
- Agenda 2063
- AU Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security

For more comprehensive information on the YPS Agenda, its key milestones as well as more guidance in regards to YPS reference documents and programming, we encourage you to visit the Youth, Peace and Security Website: www.youth4peace.info

CHAMPIONING THE YPS AGENDA

By Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

As a young person born into a country affected by conflict and violence, I grew up looking for ways to contribute to making my country a more peaceful place. Throughout history, youth movements have been important catalysts for change around the world. However, young people's voices, agency and leadership have too often been disregarded when it comes to important decision-making processes.

That is why Security Council Resolution 2250 marked such an important turning point. It was the result of years of tireless activism and advocacy by young people who wanted to contribute to building sustainable peace. The Resolution also helped to transform the narrative around young people, recognizing their positive contributions in preventing and resolving conflicts, and building resilient and peaceful societies.

In the past five years, the Resolution has continued to play an important role in strengthening the positive narrative that young people are not mere perpetrators or victims of conflict, but rather positive agents of change. It has impacted how actors across the board view and relate to youth, ultimately garnering more political support for inter-generational efforts on peace and security.

As the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, advocating for the YPS Agenda has been a top priority for me. In an unprecedented partnership between the UN system and young people, my office led on the development of the first-ever UN system-wide strategy on youth, Youth2030– which articulates a comprehensive and shared vision to operationalize the YPS Agenda on local, regional, and global levels, as one of the strategy's five core priority areas.

In 2019, UNSC Resolution 2419 – continued to call for the greater inclusion of young people in peace negotiation and mediation processes.

This was further strengthened by UNSC Resolution 2535 requesting the institutionalization of youth in the work of the UN peace and security architecture, including through political and peacekeeping missions.

Two important examples of ways my team has advocated for the implementation of the YPS Agenda include the International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes held 2019, in Helsinki, Finland and the upcoming High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes that will take place in Doha, Qatar in 2021. Building on the Helsinki symposium, we launched a policy paper titled "We are here – an integrated approach to the youth-inclusive peace process"[14]. We are also currently working with partners to develop a five-year strategy on youth-inclusive peace processes, as well as guidelines to support Member States with operationalizing YPS at country level.

In order to advocate for youth-inclusive peacebuilding initiatives, I have also undertaken various missions to conflict-affected and post-conflict countries and joined young peace builders to brief the Security Council on the implementation of the YPS Agenda.[15] At a time when the civic space around the world is shrinking and human rights are under attack, the protection of young people is another key priority for my office. My team is currently developing guidance and recommendations on the protection of young people in civic spaces.

Yet despite good progress, we must continue working to institutionalize the YPS Agenda as a core part of the UN's mandate. Without sustainable, dedicated funding, the YPS Agenda will not reach its maximum potential. We must mobilize resources to increase programming, but more importantly, increase flexible and accessible funding to directly support youth-led initiatives, movements and organizations.

It is exciting to see the momentum growing, with innovative tools being launched, and new stakeholders stepping up their support. As called on by the UN Security Council resolution 2535, my office and I will work to

the best of our ability to coordinate the Youth Peace and Security Agenda across the UN system and track the implementation of the landmark resolutions that called for increased youth participation and engagement in the matters of global peace and security in the most inclusive way possible. We can only build sustainable peace by working together while letting young people themselves lead the way.

3. Being a YPS Adviser

What is a YPS Adviser?

As the YPS Agenda has successfully gathered increasing political attention, the need to operationalize and institutionalize the agenda has become clear. With that, the demand for qualified YPS professionals and experts is increasing. But what exactly do we mean by a "YPS Adviser"?

The YPS Adviser is a professional equipped with the technical knowledge and skills to turn policy into practise, within the scope of a defined context and mandate related to the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

The YPS Adviser is an expert who understands that young women and young men living in contexts affected by conflict and insecurities often experience very different realities and have specific needs and aspirations.

The Adviser is an advocate, committed to enable young people's right to participate and facilitate their meaningful engagement. Last, but not least, the Adviser is a strategist who seeks to ensure peace and security processes are more participatory and responsive to young women and men, and that their particular views and experiences are taken into account in decision-making.

While the Security Council resolutions on YPS provide the overall scope of work for the YPS Adviser, each organization's individual mandate and structure will set the parameters for what the YPS Adviser will need to focus on and prioritize.

The role of a YPS Adviser

The role of a YPS Adviser is dynamic and will require you to be flexible and adaptive. The reality is that most organizations are still only at early stages of implementation and may have limited understanding of the Agenda and how your specific role relates to the overall work of the organization.

DIFFERENT POSSIBLE ROLES
The precise role you will be attributed with and your exact job title can differ significantly depending on the organization's mandate and setting. To illustrate the possibilities, we list some of the potential titles and roles you could expect below, which include:

POSSIBLE TITLES	FOCUS AREA	SCOPE
YPS Adviser/Advisor, YPS Specialist, YPS Analyst, YPS Associate, etc.	Policy & Strategy	Focused on the higher policy and strategy and less so on projects and initiatives. Will often act as the thematic lead, offering support capacity to other teams and leading thematic coordination.
YPS Officer, YPS Coordinator, YPS Programme Manager, YPS Project Officer, etc.	Programming	Operational role, often linked directly to the implementation of a specific project. Functions very similarly to a project manager however with a distinct focus on opportunities to mainstream YPS into programming activities, and/or the design and implementation of YPS-specific programmes.

POSSIBLE TITLES	FOCUS AREA	SCOPE
YPS Focal Point. YPS Liaison, etc.	Coordination	Often a task accumulated in conjunction with other functions of the staff. The staff will have the responsibility to champion YPS within the organization and to coordinate efforts with other counterparts performing similar functions. May or may not be in charge of YPS programming as well.

Of course, those roles are not exclusive or clearly defined. In reality, you may be expected to perform a combination of different elements of those roles. You may engage in the implementation of the YPS Agenda even if your job is not YPS specific, for example, by serving as a YPS focal point for your department or organization. Additionally, Peacebuilding Advisers, Gender Advisers, Peace and Development Advisers (PDAs) can greatly benefit from YPS to strengthen their line of work and mandates.

Regardless of your exact job title, as a YPS practitioner, it is important that you see yourself as an enabler, proactively seeking ways to help build institutional capacity and advance the YPS Agenda while being a contributing member of your team.

For the purpose of this handbook, we will use "YPS Adviser" as a generic term that encompasses all these different possible roles that will be defined by each organization's mandate, structure and context.

HAVING AN IMPACT

You will have the opportunity to make a contribution and impact on different levels. You may influence various internal and external processes, including:

- **Senior Leadership** – providing advice to the principal(s), contributing and drafting talking points, providing policy recommendations, developing thematic briefings, facilitating interactions with key stakeholders.

- **Programming Teams (including youth focal points)** – providing technical support and supporting the integration of YPS principles and aspects into the design and implementation of programmes and policies, advising different project teams and departments, mapping and monitoring relevant YPS projects and initiatives, conducting capacity building.

- **Headquarters** – contributing to reporting, providing policy recommendations, identifying trends and emerging issues, documenting good practices and lessons learned.

- **Externally** – acting as a point of reference and support for young people, partners, donors and government authorities. Supporting strategic communication and outreach efforts, speaking at public events, liaising with the media.

Be mindful of the provisional nature of your assignment. Comprehensive YPS programmes and strategies often outstretch the length of deployment of any individual adviser. This constitutes one of several imperative reasons to deliberately work to strengthen local capacity and institutionalize policies and programmes, so that structures are not dependent on the YPS Adviser alone.

Remember, your role is to champion the YPS Agenda, not to own it. From the very beginning, you need to promote shared ownership by encouraging individuals and organizations to engage and step up into leadership roles, and have a clear long-term strategy.

This long-term perspective, however, often runs contrary to the desire of governments, donors and international organizations. It may also generate frustration among young people who would like to see immediate progress and results. In this regard, it is essential that a YPS Adviser is able to set clear timelines and manage different expectations accordingly.

Dealing with resistance

The YPS Agenda aims to address power-imbalances in decision-making caused by age-based discriminatory structures and beliefs. In various contexts, the participation of young people and youth-led organizations in decision-making may be highly political. Therefore, it is not surprising that some stakeholder may not be supportive or friendly towards the YPS Agenda. It is possible you may even meet active resistance from some of the players.

Resistance by power holders who may reject the idea of shifting power dynamics is common due to the fear of a "loss of power or control". You may encounter such resistance within the community, with government counterparts, or even internally, within your own organization. Resistance is often based on stigmatized perceptions of young people as troublemakers, idle or not interested, or simply described as "the future" needless to be dealt with as a priority. Opposition towards the YPS Agenda can be due to the belief that the realization of the Agenda and youth rights is not a priority compared to other agendas and marginalized groups.

You need to learn how to manage these power struggles, navigate resistance and win support. To support you in this task, you can use the following tips adapted from the "13 steps to tackle gender discrimination" model developed by VicHealth[16].

1. **Be prepared**
   The YPS Agenda is new and challenges traditional power dynamics, therefore resistance is to be expected. In order to prepare yourself, make sure you have a solid understanding of the YPS Agenda, collect evidence and prepare possible counter arguments for reoccurring situations. This will help you to navigate and remain calm in unexpected situations of antagonism.

2. **Assess the type of resistance and who is expressing it**
   When meeting resistance, take the time to understand why it is happening and who is behind it. Assess whether the resistance is conscious or unconscious and what may be causing it. Resistance can emerge due to misinformation, stereotypical beliefs, fear of power loss, fear of competition, etc. Understanding the reasons and different types of resistance as well as *who* is responsible for it will help you tailor appropriate responses.

3. **Be a good listener and do not shame**
   Dogmatic responses to resistance can be counterproductive. You should be careful not to be interpreted as attacking someone personally or their views. Instead, you must create space for the expression of diverse views. People are more likely to listen to counter arguments if they feel safe and able to express their different viewpoints and concerns.

4. **Broaden your arguments beyond statistics**
   Not all people will be convinced by facts and rational arguments. Some people are more prone to change viewpoints if they are

"touched" emotionally. You should be ready to share real stories and personal accounts about the impact of young people in order to enable people to connect emotionally with the issue. Whenever possible, create opportunities for young people to share their own experiences. You can also highlight the benefits of generational equality and the negative impacts of marginalizing young people.

5. **Focus efforts on those you can influence**
   Changing the minds and hearts of strong opponents is hard. Instead, build alliances with those already friendly to the Agenda and focus your efforts in winning "over" those that are neutral or unconscious about their resistance. One approach may be to start collaborating with colleagues, to integrate YPS elements into existing programming. Another strategy is to sequence your interventions in a way that you start with aspects likely to face less resistance. You may even need to pilot a small initiative that will provide the concrete evidence on the benefits of meaningful youth participation to gain management support. You can then work your way up to more transformative and impactful approaches.

6. **Get leaders involved and institutionalize YPS**
   Senior leadership support is crucial in order to influence sustainable changes in the organization. Bringing the leadership onboard will help to ensure that YPS is embedded into the organization's strategies, policies and programmes contributing to the institutionalization of the agenda.

7. **Build on support from your peers and practice self-care**
   You will face setbacks and challenges along the way that may disrupt your work and discourage you. Remember that you are not alone even if you are the only person working specifically on YPS in your organization. Try to find other people who are championing the YPS Agenda within and outside your organization and build alliances with them. Seek active

membership in existing YPS networks and communities of practice. Being part of a community of YPS practitioners can help you to remain motivated and will expose you to new learning and ideas. You can also turn to gender advisers and focal points who are used to dealing with various forms of resistance to share ideas, approaches and find moral support.

8. **Walk your talk!**
   Lead by example and proactively seek ways to involve young women and men in the different aspects of your work. Encourage the inclusion of youth representatives at relevant meetings, etc. Whenever young people are involved, ensure they encounter a safe space and that their views are respected and taken into account. In case they may be subjected to any kind of domination techniques by other stakeholders, you need to support young people to counter that, and if required, intervene on their behalf to ensure their protection.

9. **Monitor progress and celebrate success**
   Changing entrenched age-based discrimination structures and power-imbalances will not happen overnight. It will take time. In order to sustain momentum and motivate yourself and others, try to establish clear milestones and regular feedback loops, they will help you to visualize progress and identify where resistance may remain. Also, take the time to appreciate, recognize and celebrate progress and all the small victories along the way.

Navigating ambiguity and "doing no harm"

It is crucial to recognize that "youth" are not a similar and homogenous group. Quite the opposite, young women and men represent a broad and diverse range of individuals, with various backgrounds, needs, realities and aspirations. Thus, young people's individual experiences are unique, which often translates into different views and opinions about the world, their communities and what needs to be done.

At times, young people's opinions and views may be perceived as conflicting or contradictory to the initiative or of the views of the community at large. This is not to say that those divergent opinions are not valid or should be disregarded. Young people expressing divergent views must also be assured of their right to express themselves and be included.

As a YPS adviser, you need to be mindful and supportive of diversity. You need to create safe spaces for dialogue between young people with different views and conflicting ideas. You need to take into consideration young people's different and specific needs when deciding on your approaches, particularly in order to reach out and include young people from marginalized groups, who are often left behind.

Being aware and sensitive to local cultural practices, traditions and beliefs will help you to better understand the context. Remain humble in that approach and be careful not to impose your own value systems on the young women and men and organizations you are looking to work with.

Traditional practices and cultural bias often lead to misconceptions about young people as a problem in communities. These misconceptions are also often gendered, where young men are perceived as security threats and young women as victims without agency. **Shifting this narrative and recognizing the positive contributions of young women and men is a core part of the role of a YPS Adviser**.

Whenever you are planning to engage young people, be aware that young people might be stigmatized, prosecuted and/or harassed because of their engagement with the international community. Be mindful of these possible consequences and aware of the wider impacts of any interventions and processes. Diligently put in place all mitigation measures to ensure the protection of young people's privacy and well-being.

It is crucial to analyse and mitigate risks and ensure a "do no harm"[17] approach to any engagement with young people.

"DO NO HARM" – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Stakeholder & beneficiaries identification	What different youth constituencies and identity groups exist in the context? Are the different youth groups appropriately represented among the target group and beneficiaries?
Planning and implementing initiatives	• Have the conflict dynamics and its impact on youth from diverse backgrounds and gender identities been considered throughout the planning and implementation of the initiative? • What existing systems, structures, organizations and safe spaces in the context are young women and men using to connect and/or solve problems? Is it possible to build on these mechanisms when designing the initiative? • Is there a risk that existing youth-led mechanisms and safe spaces may be undermined by the initiative? Are you putting the mechanisms and the young people using them at risk if you approach them as an international actor? If yes, how can that be mitigated? • What unintended negative impacts and/or direct threats on individual youth and/or their organizations may occur during the implementation of the initiative? What is the plan to manage and mitigate those risks? • Is the initiative taking on roles that should be performed by youth organizations or mandated institutions? Is there a risk that the initiative may undermine their ownership and/or authority? • Are certain (youth) actors or authorities legitimized because of their involvement in the initiative? Is there a risk that the initiative would reward wrong behaviours and practices? • What resources will the initiative inject into the context (goods, services, capacity, jobs, rents, etc.)? How will these be distributed among different youth constituencies? • Is there any particular youth group or part of the population that may be perceived as benefiting more than others from the initiative? Can there be negative consequences of this?
Monitoring implementation and measuring impact	Have you considered any cultural and gender biases or practices that may hinder the participation of specific youth groups (for example: young women and LGBTI individuals)? How can you mitigate that?

BEING A YOUTH ADVISER IN SOMALIA

By João Scarpelini, YPS Expert and former Youth Adviser at the UN in Somalia

Between 2015 and 2019, I was appointed to serve as the UN Youth Adviser in Somalia, tasked to provide technical support to the UN senior leadership in the country and to coordinate the inter-agency youth response.

Because the role was completely new, it was hard in the beginning for different agencies to fully understand the scope of my role. Some assumed that my presence would replace the need to engage young Somalis. I was often mistaken for the "youth representative" in the room.

With time, agencies started to understand my role as an enabler and to see the value in having dedicated capacity that could help them to engage better and more consistently with young beneficiaries and youth-led partner organizations.

Because over 70% of the population in Somalia is under the age of 35, there was a misassumption at the beginning that any activity would automatically benefit young people. At the same time, whenever asked, the UN leadership was not able to explain or report what they were doing for the young people of Somalia.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, we worked to identify youth focal points within all entities of the UN Country Team and institutionalize the inter-agency working group (WG) on youth as an official body, accountable to the Country Team. Through the WG, we were able to map current youth initiatives and identify programming gaps. This data, combined with various consultations with youth groups, resulted in the first UN Youth Strategy for Somalia (2016-2019).

The youth strategy was an important tool because it established a clear vision for the entire UN Country Team. It enabled us to improve and diversify programming, foster inter-agency collaboration and more importantly, it provided us with a clear narrative of what we were doing and what needed to be done. Having a clear vision enabled us to mobilize financial and political support to take the youth portfolio to scale, and to significantly expand our impact in Somalia.

4. The YPS Adviser's tasks and function

Specific tasks of the YPS Adviser

Overall, the YPS Adviser provides advice to policy development, supports the implementation of relevant programmes and coordinates multi-stakeholder efforts related to the YPS Agenda. More specifically, based on the priorities put forward by your organization, you can expect that some of the following elements are included in your Terms of Reference:

PRIORITY FOCUS	DESCRIPTION OF TASKS
Strengthening YPS coordination mechanisms at different levels.	Supports coordination of the integrated YPS response in the country.
	Chairs and/or provides secretariat support to inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination platforms and ensures appropriate mainstreaming of the YPS Agenda into other coordination platforms (for example: Donor coordination meetings, UN Country Teams, etc).
	Supports joint resource mobilization efforts and provides a coordination and information-sharing platform for donors and government officials and other entities on YPS issues.
Strengthening coherence and strategic alignment of YPS country level implementation	Supports joint youth-sensitive conflict analysis, and the development of youth-responsive policies, strategies and programmes.
	Fosters joined-up planning/programming and multi-disciplinary approaches towards collective outcomes.
	Encourages the generation and use of age-and-gender-disaggregated data and statistics in analysis, planning and programming.
	Supports the development and monitoring of YPS-specific indicators.

PRIORITY FOCUS	DESCRIPTION OF TASKS
	Supports the mapping of youth programmes and initiatives among all stakeholders, including national and international organizations, donors, governmental entities and youth-led organizations.
	Oversees the implementation of the YPS portfolio in the country, enabling greater effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and transparency.
	Supports the identification, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned and good practices in YPS policies and programming.
Developing YPS awareness and institutional capacity	Provides technical support and advice to officials and counterparts that are seeking to engage with the YPS Agenda.
	Conducts capacity assessment and provides capacity building support to staff members and counterparts.
	Supports the development of YPS-specific research, thematic briefings on YPS, progress and situation reports, etc.
	Supports the development of YPS-specific media features and collaborates on communications/public information campaigns.
Enhancing the representation and engagement of young people in decision-making at all levels	Acts as a key liaison and focal point for young people, youth serving and youth-led organizations.
	Supports the organization of YPS events and facilitates the participation of young people in peace and security-related events.
	Supports the establishment of permanent mechanisms of youth participation. (for example: Youth Advisory Boards, Youth Councils, etc.)
	Facilitates engagement of youth representatives with senior officials.

The list is not exhaustive and depending on your organization and setting you may also be required to navigate thematic overlaps and engage in other cross-cutting efforts. For example, you might have to engage in, or simultaneously cover, other agendas such as:

- Women, Peace and Security (WPS),
- Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE),
- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), and
- Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), to name just a few.

These agendas are complimentary in essence, however, you may confront diverging aspects or even contradictory definitions of core principles and concepts. The understanding and narratives around youth can differ between the agendas. This can have implications on implementation. For example, depending on the narrative, the protection of youth may be prioritized at the expense of their agency. Likewise, agendas that may emphasize youth predominately as a threat will likely devalue youth's positive contributions to peace and stability.

As a YPS Adviser, you need to be aware of these potential conflicts and the risks that with accompany them. Above all you must be ready to defend the fact that **YPS is an agenda in its own right.**

The functions of the YPS Adviser

YPS is a cross-cutting and comprehensive agenda, thus, the exact role of a YPS Adviser can differ considerably depending on the setting she/he operates in.

YPS advisers might also operate at different levels, including global (HQ), regional and country-levels. The scope, the focus and the mandate of your organization will directly shape your role and determine your day-to-day tasks. Some of those settings may include:

- United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, Special Political Missions, Country Teams, Regional Development Teams and Headquarters (Secretariat and Specialized Agencies),
- European External Action Service Headquarters and EU Embassies (called Delegations), EU Commission (Development (DEVCO), Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions,
- OSCE Secretariat, Institutions and Field Operations.

The entity's mandate and activities and its internal organization are all decisive factors determining the YPS Adviser's tasks.

Notwithstanding these differences, there are a number of tasks that are "typical" of the job. YPS advisers do not necessarily carry out all of these tasks all the time. But they represent the core of what the YPS Adviser should know how to do.

These core functions fall into nine categories:
- youth-sensitive analysis,
- strategic planning,
- coordination,
- building and strengthening capacity,
- advising on YPS,

- advising on YPS programming,
- reporting,
- representation, and
- enabling youth participation.

Youth-sensitive analysis

Analysing the environment, the background and the dynamics of any given context is the first and most important step to ensure an understanding of the setting and the stakeholders you will have to work with. Thorough and comprehensive context analysis will ensure coherent and effective advice. Thus, early on in your assignment, commit time to read background documents, talk to colleagues, partners and youth organizations to gather enough information to build an accurate understanding of the context where you will operate.

Young people represent the majority of the population in most conflict-affected countries. This fact is a pressing demographic imperative that cannot be ignored. Understanding the realities, needs and experiences of such an important cohort of the total population in any given setting is essential in order to comprehend the context and the conflict.

Despite this, conflict analyses are commonly "youth blind". They often disregard the agency of young women and men and their positive contributions to peace and stability in their communities. Neglecting the contributions of young people unfortunately reduces opportunities for lasting peace.

Even worse, poor and superficial analysis may reinforce stereotypes and create the impression that youth solely constitute a threat to peace – which is risking further exclusion and marginalization of young women and men.

A youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis is a prerequisite for any successful peacebuilding effort. Good analysis can be a powerful tool to countering incorrect narratives and policy myths surrounding the youth demographic.

A youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis will not only provide you with necessary information and data about the specific situation of youth it will also help you gain a deeper understanding of the different aspects of the conflict by, for example, elucidating how age may intersect with overall conflict dimensions, root causes and drivers as well as peace opportunities.

In particular, as age intersects with all other social identities, a youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis provides insights on the situation of other groups and sheds light on exclusion and rights abuses in society, such as those related to gender or ethnicity. A youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis can therefore strengthen the rights-based aspects of analyses and peace and security programming in general.

Understanding young people in all their diversity, their realities and unique experiences will reduce the risk of developing ineffective and damaging interventions. Clarity with regard to the push and pull factors that influence young women and men in their decision-making and behaviours and how youth contribute to peacebuilding will increase the likelihood of targeting change mechanisms that will best contribute to peaceful outcomes. It can also help you to identify early warning signals and adherent indicators to inform prevention, preparedness and efforts to reduce risk.

YOUTH-SENSITIVE CONFLICT ANALYSIS
A youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis requires the application of a *youth lens*. A youth lens is an analytical filter based on knowledge about:

• young people of different backgrounds and identities,
• the socio-political context, and the
• age-based norms and power structures affecting them.

The information you need for your analysis can be acquired through data from external sources including research and resources produced by youth-led organizations, and by listening to young people's own experiences and perceptions.

Research/Data   Youth Lens   Young people's voices

Knowledge   Knowledge
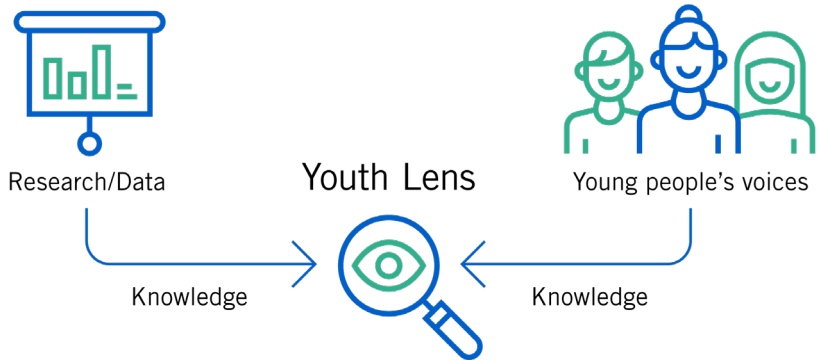
For a conflict analysis to be youth-sensitive, a youth lens should be applied on both the *process* and *content* of the conflict analysis.

Process   Content   Youth sensitive conflict analysis

With regard to the process, a participatory approach which ensures the meaningful engagement of young women and men throughout the analysis process will significantly strengthen the final product. Whenever possible, including young people in the data collection, analysis and validation can be an effective strategy to increase the legitimacy, relevance and quality of the conflict analysis.

If carried out effectively, the mere process of conducting, for example, a participatory and inclusive stakeholder mapping can serve as a basis to bridge the gap between young people and decision-makers.

It is important to note that although beneficial, youth participation alone might not ensure the youth-sensitivity of a conflict analysis. Young people's engagement in the process itself is not a guarantee that a comprehensive generational perspective, with a focus on youth, will be reflected in the analysis. Therefore, youth participation is not a replacement but a complement to the systematic application of a youth lens when collecting and analysing data and available resources. In fact, a solid comprehensive and youth-sensitive conflict analysis will only be achieved with a combination of both.

When it comes to gathering data for the content of your analysis you need to collect evidence-based information about the *specific situation of youth* as well as on *youths' experiences and perception* of aspects and issues relevant for your analysis. This means that you need to gather statistical information about the number of young people in the population, their political representation, education, etc. You also need to talk with young people from various backgrounds to understand, for example, what they believe to be the main drivers of conflict and who the main stakeholders are.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN APPLYING A YOUTH LENS TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

Although each and every context is unique, when conducting your youth-sensitive conflict analysis, it is important that you ask yourself a few questions, which may include:

UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER CONTEXT	
ASSESSMENT QUESTION	**PROBING QUESTIONS**
What is the social, political and economic situation of young women and men that are from different backgrounds?	• What is the demographic composition of the youth cohort? • What access to basic services, rights and opportunities do young people have? • Are there specific challenges or barriers hindering young women's and young men's participation in society? • Are there any specific legislation and/or national policies/strategies regarding youth in the country?
What is the narrative around youth in the context?	• What activities, values, norms and potential stereotypes are associated with young men and young women respectively? • What are the social, cultural and economic factors that impact the understanding of youth roles in society and during conflict? • How are young men and young women being depicted in the media? Are there gender aspects to it?

UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER CONTEXT	
ASSESSMENT QUESTION	**PROBING QUESTIONS**
What are the age-related power structures and dynamics of inequality in the context?	• What age-related power structures and inequalities do you observe at different levels and aspects of society? • How do these inequalities affect young people's access to rights and freedoms? • How do these inequalities and social norms about youth affect their behaviour and the way they are treated?

CONFLICT DYNAMICS

ASSESSMENT QUESTION	PROBING QUESTIONS
What is the direct impact of the conflict on different groups of young women and young men?	• What does age and gender-disaggregated data tell you about for example conflict related deaths, forced migration and displacement of young people? • How are sectors, institutions and services important to young people affected by the conflict?
What roles do young women and young men of different backgrounds play in the conflict?	• What push and pull factors influence young people's decisions and behaviours in the conflict? • In what ways do the roles played by young women and men reinforce or challenge existing age norms and/or power structures?
How do age-based identities and norms impact recruitment practices?	• Are young people directly targeted for both voluntary and non-voluntary recruitment? By whom? • What profile of young people are typically targeted? Are there age and gender differences? • What positive and negative incentives are provided for the voluntary and non-voluntary recruitment of young people?

KEY ISSUES AND ROOT CAUSES

ASSESSMENT QUESTION	PROBING QUESTIONS
What is perceived by young people as the key issues, root causes and conflict drivers?	• What are the key issues, root causes and conflict drivers identified by young people? • Do these descriptions differ from those of other generations and social groups? • Are young women and young men disproportionately affected by the issues identified?

KEY ACTORS AND THEIR RELATIONS	
Who are the key actors in the conflict according to youth?	• Who do young people see as the key actors in the conflict? • Are there generational and/or gender differences in who are perceived as key actors? • Are there specific entities within the national, regional or local authorities that have a mandate to work with young people? If so, how are those entities perceived by young people?
What youth-led actors and/or initiatives are taking active part in the conflict and/or the peacebuilding process?	• What role do these youth-led actors have in the conflict and/or peacebuilding process? • What groups of youth do they represent? • Who holds influence over the youth-led organizations and/or initiatives?
POST-CONFLICT DYNAMICS (IF APPLICABLE)	
What are young people's perceptions regarding the peace process or agreement?	• Have young women and men with different backgrounds and identities been represented in the peace process? • Is the peace process and/or agreement perceived to be legitimate among young people of diverse backgrounds? • Have young people's specific needs, grievances and aspirations been reflected in the peace agreement?
Have the role(s) of young people in building sustainable peace been recognized in the peace process?	• Are there any provisions for the active participation of young women and men in the peace process (for example: in the ceasefire monitoring, as mediators, etc.)? • Are there resources allocated to support youth-led mediation and reconciliation efforts? • Are there any youth-led reconciliation and conflict prevention initiatives?

POST-CONFLICT DYNAMICS (IF APPLICABLE)	
Conflict risk factors and threats.	• What are the conflict and security cleavages in the context according to youth? • What are the potential conflict drivers in the context according to young women and men? • What structures (institutions, laws and agreements) maintain the conflictual situation and the marginalization of youth? • Are there behaviours and practices of certain youth groups that could lead to increased conflict? • According to young women and men, what are the opportunities to break negative dynamics and tendencies and to actively bridging the conflict cleavages?

For a more comprehensive list of suggested questions, read the chapter on youth-sensitive conflict analysis in the YPS Programming Handbook by the UN and FBA[18].

USING THE ANALYSIS

A solid youth-sensitive analysis should be the foundation of any strategy, policy or programme that you will eventually initiate and work with during your assignment. In this regard, as a YPS Adviser, you are expected to translate those findings into concrete recommendations and to advocate internally for the analysis to be taken into account by your organization.

The knowledge gathered throughout the process will be useful in designing thematic briefings, country profiles, and influencing decision-making. You will be able to build on the conflict analysis to inform future programme design, shape strategic planning and to include a youth perspective into, for example, country assessments and quarterly reports.

As the conflict analysis is your prime source of validated knowledge, you should proactively seek opportunities to use the findings of the conflict analysis to influence decision-making, inside and outside of your organization.

However, it is important to note that a conflict analysis can be highly political as it may have a direct impact on the political discourse and alter narratives. It is therefore imperative that a clear methodology is applied, potential biases are disclosed and mitigated and that a "do no harm" approach is followed.

APPLYING THE "YOUTH LENS" TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS

By Erike Tanghøj, Youth, Peace and Security Specialist at FBA

Although most peace and security practitioners would agree that a conflict analysis is crucial, almost all of the analyses I have come across have been completely lacking in terms of a youth perspective. This is a real problem. Disregarding the youth perspective can lead to wrong assumptions, that risk fuelling negative stereotypes and unintentionally contributing to escalating tensions and conflict.

My first recommendation to any YPS Adviser is therefore to find out whether your organization has undertaken a conflict analysis and, if so, to analyse it from a youth perceptive. If it turns out that youth has not been considered your first step would be to try to mobilize internal support in order to carry out a complimentary analysis that provides youth-specific data. Such an exercise will also provide an excellent opportunity to reach out to different youth groups and to build a rapport with them by inviting them to partake in the analysis process.

However, avoid the mistake of creating an "illusion of inclusion" by simply arranging tokenistic "consultations" just to tick the "participation box". Meaningfully including youth and enabling their voice to be heard will require more work, but the results are worth it. Do not be afraid to let youth define the research questions or to hire qualified youth to at least co-lead the process.

My last, and perhaps most important piece of advice is that, if you or your organization has to rely on external consultants to carry out any kind of analysis, do make sure that the Terms of Reference explicitly state that a youth participatory approach shall be applied throughout the process and that youth-specific data must be collected. This will ensure that youth are not forgotten or simply ignored!

Strategic planning

Creating a clear vision and a common narrative will help you build momentum and accelerate the implementation of the YPS Agenda. For that, you need to build on all the information you gather through analysis, programme mapping and coordination with all stakeholders and translate this knowledge into coherent strategic plans.

Although the YPS Agenda is comprehensive, its global nature often leads to a misconception that it consists of a "foreign" or "HQ-driven agenda" which is not relevant or applicable to the local context. Therefore, an important part of your work will be to:

• localize the agenda and build on what works,
• align the YPS Agenda with your organization's mandate,
• translate global recommendations into context-specific targets building on locally owned narratives, and
• facilitate knowledge exchange between local, regional and global levels.

CONTRIBUTING TO STRATEGIC PLANNING
Throughout your assignment, you will likely be involved in different strategic planning processes, which may include developing:

• YPS-specific targets for annual work-plans and pluriannual country programmes,
• YPS national strategies for your organization,
• National YPS action plans in co-operation with government authorities and other stakeholders (as requested by SC resolution 2535),
• YPS-specific elements to be integrated into other country strategies and frameworks (for example: Rule of Law, Security Sector Reform, etc.).

In addition to contributing to the design and formulation of strategic plans, your role will also include the operationalization of various normative strategies and frameworks that are already in place. For instance, if your assignment is with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, your work will be further guided by the:

• UN Co-operation Framework in the country,
• Agenda 2030,
• UN Youth Strategy (Youth 2030),
• African Youth Charter,
• African Union 2063 Agenda, to name just a few.

It is, therefore, important to be aware and understand those different frameworks in order to align your work and mandate and to ensure that your efforts contribute to the implementation of existing institutional frameworks.

FORMULATING STRATEGIC PLANS

Although there is no set formula or recipe for a good strategy, there are some key principles you need to be mindful of when leading the development of strategic plans. In order to ensure a good process and final product, make sure that the strategy is:

• **Inclusive and representative** – of the voices and views of all relevant stakeholders both externally and within the organization. Plans need to take into account the diversity of young people and their specific needs and aspirations.

• **Evidence-based** – built upon reliable data, concrete lessons learned and an understanding of what works in the given context.

• **Age-and-gender-responsive** – taking into account how different efforts may impact women and men as well as demographic

sectors of the population differently – making sure specific needs are met and that no one is left behind.

- **Joined-up and integrated** – acknowledging the different efforts already being made and providing a comprehensive outlook on how those initiatives complement and reinforce each other.

- **Sustainable** – with a clear understanding of the long-term impacts and concrete plan for sustaining momentum and progress beyond the duration of your assignment.

In the process of strategic planning, there are some important concerns that need to be taken into account, which include:

STRATEGIC PLANNING – THINGS TO CONSIDER	
Where are we now?	• What is the current social, political and economic situation of young women and men in the context at hand? • What age-and-gender-disaggregated data is available that we can use as a baseline? • What are the available national, regional and global strategies, policies and frameworks that will guide your strategic planning? • Who is currently doing what? Are there other YPS initiatives already taking place? Do young people of different backgrounds perceive those efforts as legit? Is there something that should be done but is still missing? • What is the result and what are the lessons learnt from previous strategies, policies, programmes etc. with regard to YPS?
What is the vision?	• What are we trying to achieve with our work? • What are the expected outcomes and outputs? How do they relate to the goals and priorities of the YPS Agenda? • What are the key issues young women and men identified as their priorities? • Are they reflected in your vision?

STRATEGIC PLANNING – THINGS TO CONSIDER	
How do we get there?	• What is your theory of change? Is it responsive to youth? • Are there preconditions for you to achieve what you want? Are the necessary resources available? • How to best sequence your activities? • What role will young people play in the strategic planning process? • Are there any risks associated with your approach? How can you mitigate those risks?
Who is involved?	• Who will lead each aspect of implementation? Are there opportunities for activities to be managed by youth-led organizations? • Who needs to be involved in the different steps of the process to ensure a broad representation of perspectives? • How to ensure that no one is left behind?
How do we measure results?	• How can we monitor progress and measure our impact? • How will we know that we achieved our objectives? • How can youth be part of the monitoring and follow-up phases? What accountability mechanisms do we need to establish to ensure that youth are part of assessing and validating results and impact?

Additionally, in the process of developing or assessing any strategic plan – YPS-specific or not – it is crucial to apply the youth lens when reviewing it. Some of questions you may consider are:

ASSESSING A STRATEGIC PLAN FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE	
Disaggregated	• Is the analysis and indicators presenting youth-specific and age-and-gender-disaggregated data? • Are the needs and aspirations of young people of diverse backgrounds clearly reflected in the objectives and the indicators?

ASSESSING A STRATEGIC PLAN FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE	
Inclusive	• Has the strategy been communicated to young people and their organizations? • Have young women and men of diverse backgrounds had an equal participation in the planning process? If not, why and what can be done to ensure a broader representation in the next phases? • Have youth been given the same opportunities to influence the strategy as other groups? • Are young women and young men being given the same opportunities? • Have young people been part of validating the strategy? • Will young people have the opportunity to be part of the implementation and evaluation of the strategy (through task forces, steering committees, etc).
Responsive	• Are there any youth-specific objectives, indicators and targeted activities? • Have the different needs and aspirations of young women and men been reflected throughout all the components of the strategy? • Are young people able to engage in and benefit from different components of the strategic plan? • Was the strategy based on youth-sensitive analyses, evaluations and/or audits? • Is the strategy aligned with other youth relevant policies and frameworks relevant to the context?
Feasibility	• Is there a clear timeframe for the implementation of the strategic plan? • Are there appropriate resources (human, technical, financial, etc.) allocated to the implementation of the strategic plan? • Is there enough support from senior leadership to ensure the full implementation of the strategy? • Was there a capacity assessment to understand local capacity to implement the strategic plan? Was this capacity assessment inclusive of youth-led groups and organizations? • Are there specific components of the strategic plan that can be implemented by and/or in partnership with youth-led groups and organizations?

SUSTAINABILITY

Considering the limited duration of your assignment and being mindful of the time required for planning and initiating new initiatives, it is important to ensure the implementation is not dependent on your presence in the country. Strategic plans should outlast the duration of your assignment.

Creating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility over any strategic plan is a prerequisite to ensure its successful and sustainable implementation. Remember, your role is to champion the agenda, not to own it. From the very beginning, you need to promote shared ownership by encouraging individuals and organizations to engage and step up into leadership roles, hence ensuring the institutionalization of the strategy.

DEVELOPING A YPS NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

By Joanna Broumana, Youth, Peace and Security Associate at UNFPA Jordan

In October 2018, I joined UNFPA Jordan Country Office as the International UN Youth Volunteer on Youth Peace and Security Associate, and what a great and rich journey it has been!

My main task is to support the coordination of the organization's work on YPS, mainly the co-chairing of the Secretariat of the Jordan Youth, Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition. Together with 22 member organizations and 24 youth members, we collaborate on YPS efforts while ensuring that young people are actively included in the implementation of the UNSCR 2250. I have been lucky enough to be able to work with and for young people, being a young woman myself!

By investing in young people's capacities, agency and leadership, establishing partnerships and collaborative action on YPS and identifying the national strategic direction of YPS in Jordan, we are paving the way for a future YPS National Action Plan.

With so many different actors involved, the most challenging aspect is the time it takes while trying to reach consensus!

The biggest lesson for me is that we should put emphasis on the fundamental right of young people to participate in all decisions that concern them and work to translate this into action rather than focusing on the technicalities of the UNSCR 2250.

So, my advice to any YPS Adviser engaged in supporting the work of national YPS efforts is to invest in translating the UNSCR 2250 into something tangible and real, that we as young people can relate to, benefit from and use in our daily lives within the YPS framework but also other existing strategies and frameworks, in order to avoid reinventing the wheel. The YPS Agenda was created by young people all over the world and should therefore lead the national efforts.

Coordination

In any given setting you are operating in, you will be faced with a broad range of stakeholders representing different interests and views, as well as specific needs and priorities. The cross-cutting nature of the YPS Agenda also further contributes to a diversity of actors and sectors that will be relevant to your work in one way or another.

Coordination is important as it offers concrete platforms to enable greater effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and coherence among the various efforts being implemented at country level. It provides an avenue to synergize programmes, policies and initiatives, which will help you deliver on your mandate in a more integrated and effective way.

Effective coordination will help organizations to avoid duplication, build on each other's work, and better utilize resources which in turn will leverage the collective impact.

Upon starting your assignment, inform yourself of the already existing national, regional and local coordination structures and frameworks before proposing the establishment of anything new. In order to avoid fatigue or the creation of further layers of work for the stakeholders, investigate whether you can combine YPS aspects into already existing efforts.

WHO AND WHAT TO COORDINATE?

Throughout your assignment, you will likely be involved in different coordination spaces, with different players aiming for different goals. Your main goal is to facilitate multi-stakeholder coordination internally and externally in regard to YPS.

You can be asked to engage in more specific internal coordination spaces, such as:

- Organization-wide coordination structures at country, regional and global levels;
- Inter-agency coordination on youth at country, regional and global levels; and
- Field-HQ coordination.

Or, you may be asked to engage in more external coordination spaces, such as:

- Donor coordination;
- Inter-governmental coordination;
- Security sector coordination; and
- Youth sector coordination.

And the list can go on, depending on the complexity of the operations you are deployed to. Some of those coordination spaces are meant only for information sharing among stakeholders while others might have a specific aim, such as:

- facilitating joint situation and problem analysis;
- fostering joined-up planning/programming;
- developing joint resource mobilization efforts; or
- collaborating on communications/public information campaigns.

In this regard, be mindful that you will be expected to collaborate with different coordination efforts not necessarily linked to YPS, championing YPS inclusion and youth mainstreaming into other spaces and agendas in addition to coordinating the YPS-specific efforts.

Coordination does not mean you will own the agenda, neither does it imply that you will be the one managing all initiatives implemented under the YPS framework. Quite the opposite, your responsibility is to champion and promote the YPS Agenda, enabling other individuals and organizations to take ownership for their implementation as well.

Establishing a network of YPS focal points is a powerful way to create a support system and ensure shared ownership and effective coordination of YPS. The focal points system provides members with the opportunity to exchange information, synergize programming and co-create learning. Those networks could be internal to your organization or involve other stakeholders, and it could operate at local, national, regional and global levels.

In sum, your coordination duties involve:
• bringing people and organizations together and fostering collaboration and partnerships,
• consolidating information, managing knowledge and information sharing,
• facilitating alignment of the various initiatives and identifying gaps, threats and opportunities,
• leading the development of a shared vision and coherent narrative.

Multi-stakeholder coordination can often be an incredibly challenging job, as different teams and organizations have their own mandates and priorities. You are expected to lead without having the authority or the necessary leverage to do so, nor the concrete means to hold people accountable.

While you may have a YPS-specific role and mandate, most frequently, other counterparts will be juggling their time between managing other responsibilities and competing priorities. In this regard, be mindful of the limitations of the task, yet strategic on how you will approach the situation.

In order to be successful, you need to demonstrate the value of coordination and encourage engagement by proving how beneficial it can be for all stakeholders involved.

STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Inclusion & representation	• Have you ensured that all relevant partners, counterparts and stakeholders, including youth representatives and YPS focal points, have been invited to the process? • Have you engaged the appropriate level of representation from all stakeholders? • Are there sensitivities between stakeholders that you need to be mindful of? If yes, how can they be mitigated?
Meaningful engagement	• Do you have to meet with any specific stakeholder in advance to prepare for their participation? • Do any stakeholder representatives require special support in order to meaningfully engage, such as travel allowances or childcare? • Are all participants clear about the objectives and structure of the meeting? • Is it clear who is chairing the meeting? And does that person have the mandate to do so? • Are the representatives attending the meeting able to influence discussions and participate in the decision-making?
Sustaining momentum	• How frequent should the coordination meetings be? • How will agreements and decisions be monitored between meetings and factored into the operations? • How will information points and decisions from the meeting be communicated with relevant stakeholders, including youth representatives, that were not at the meeting?

IMPROVING COORDINATION

By Elmaja Bavčić, National Program Officer Gender and Youth, at OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Promoting a harmonized and coherent approach to work with youth and for youth among various actors in a political organization is never an easy job, and this is true also at the OSCE, an organization whose work is based on consensual decisions agreed by the participating States, and whose executive structures have their own mandate.

From time to time, it gets challenging to facilitate information sharing and consolidate the organization-wide efforts on youth and security. In my position I am coordinating networks of youth focal points in the Mission, Youth Advisory Group as well as the coordination of different external actors in the area of youth.

In addition to everyday work, this gets very challenging as coordination efforts require additional energy.

For me, what really works is maintaining personal contacts with all relevant stakeholders, understanding their interests and responsibilities, clarifying the respective mandate, sharing responsibilities, as well as providing platforms for sharing good practices. And most of all, building a sense of community and trust.

What I found is useful is to keep with the regular schedule (quarterly, semi-annual, once a year meetings depending on the priorities and your group) as well as to manage expectations. Setting up the goal and purpose of the coordination meetings at the immediate beginning will help you define your involvement and ensure that work is equally distributed among actors.

So, whenever you start your assignment, make sure you do your work diligently, identify and consult your colleagues, understand their vision,

build on their experience and expertise, ensure that your proposed course of action is acceptable to all the parties and meets their needs and expectations. Act in good faith and in the interests of your organization, and don't forget to be creative. Your most important assignment is to promote a genuine and open working environment- the most effective way to achieve the best results!

Building and strengthening institutional capacity

Impactful institutional capacity development can work as an engine to propel the YPS Agenda forward and multiply the effects of efforts made. Capacity development is thus a key operational avenue for realizing the YPS Agenda. To date, YPS institutional capacity remains largely inconsistent and limited across institutions, partners and organizations. Even within an individual organization, the familiarity with the YPS Agenda might vary between units and levels. In some cases, the YPS awareness may simply be non-existent.

As a YPS Adviser, you are therefore recommended to commit time and energy to assess and strengthen the capacity of your organization, partners and counterparts. Building institutional capacity is also the way to ensure that your work will have lasting impact beyond the scope of your assignment.

For your efforts to have real impact, you need to be analytical and tactful. You must understand the different elements that contribute to the overall capacity of an organization.

While it is important to build and strengthen the capacity of your organization and its partners, remember that **not everyone needs to become a YPS expert**. Your goal should be to sensitize relevant stakeholders to the YPS Agenda and to help them identify opportunities to integrate YPS consistently into their work.

UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
It is rather common to define capacity as the knowledge or skills you need in order to "do something". It is therefore not surprising that there is a real tendency to limit capacity building efforts to training initiatives alone. This is problematic since it is rarely enough to *know how to do* something unless you, or your management, *want to do it* and you have the necessary *opportunities or resources to do it*.

Consequently, it is useful to understand the institutional capacity of an organization to successfully operationalize the YPS Agenda in terms of:

Will

Knowledge

Opportunity

Institutional capacity
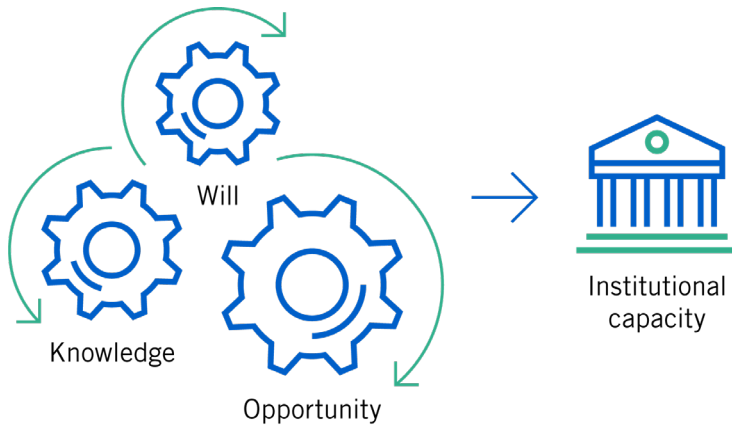
- The **will** to commit, support and prioritize the implementation of the YPS Agenda;
- **Knowledge** of the YPS Agenda, its governing frameworks and the different methodologies available; and
- The **opportunities** to implement the Agenda, such as adequate financial resources, enabling mandates and legal frameworks, support networks, etc.

Consequently, the institutional capacity of an organization is not only dependent on its staff having knowledge about the YPS Agenda, its principles and building blocks. It requires that the knowledge is combined with a genuine organizational will and mandate to prioritize implementation, as well as an enabling an environment that provides the right opportunities to turn the Agenda into practice.

ASSESSING EXISTING CAPACITIES AND IDENTIFYING CAPACITY NEEDS

Prior to designing any kind of capacity building initiative, you need to do a comprehensive assessment of existing capacities, gaps and needs. This will help you better target your interventions and design initiatives that are more responsive and relevant. For example, organizing an ad-hoc training for project managers will have limited impact if the capacity gap is actually due to funding or even a lack of commitment from senior management.

When carrying out an assessment, remember that the ability to successfully implement the YPS Agenda might be conditioned by the political environment in which your organization operates. It is also dependent on the capacity of other stakeholders, such as partner organizations, government counterparts and youth organizations. This means that narrowing the analysis, and subsequently the interventions to your organization alone may not be sufficient to have a sustained impact.

The following examples of assessment questions can help you to map and analyse organizational capacity.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Will	• What support to the YPS Agenda is expressed in the mandate of the organization? • What support for the YPS Agenda has been expressed at senior management level (for instance, in reports, emails, speeches, etc.)? • Have any specific commitments been made by senior management regarding YPS? Is there a budget allocated? Are there specific YPS objectives and indicators included in the organization's strategic plan? • What support to the YPS Agenda is expressed by the government in the country of operations? Is there an existing youth policy and/or national action plan for YPS? • What support for the YPS Agenda is expressed by the donor community in the country of operations? Is YPS part of the donors' funding strategies?
Knowledge	• What is the level of knowledge within the different levels and functions of the organization regarding the YPS Agenda? • What is the perception around youth within the organization? Is it in line with the principles of the YPS Agenda? Is there a tendency of stereotyping youth in internal and external documents and communications? • Are there any youth-specific reports or studies that have been produced by the organization? Is the content of these reports and studies in line with the core principles of the YPS Agenda? • How familiar are the key government counterparts with the YPS Agenda and its fundamental frameworks, such as the YPS resolutions? • Are the core principles and messages of the YPS Agenda understood and adhered to by the relevant government institutions? Is there a tendency of regarding and depicting youth as "troublemakers" or as "peacebuilders"? • What is the level of understanding of the YPS Agenda among partners and within the donor community? Is the narrative around youth in line with YPS principles and values? Are there clear references to YPS frameworks incorporated into country strategies?

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Sustaining momentum	• Has a budget been allocated for YPS-related activities and projects?
	• Are there specific YPS funds/windows available?
	• What specific YPS steering documents (such as policies and strategies) are in place at the organization? Are they providing relevant guidance for staff?
	• Is there a YPS focal system in place within the organization?
	• Are there specific budget lines for youth in the government budget?
	• Are the local and national legal frameworks youth friendly? Are there any discriminatory aspects to them?
	• Are there YPS focal points within the relevant government institutions?
	• Are there specific YPS funding mechanisms available for YPS initiatives?
	• Is there a YPS "group of friends" established within the donor community?
	• Is there a national youth-led YPS coalition in the country? Are there other youth organizations or networks that are actively working on YPS-related issues?

You should aim to include the target group in the process of identifying capacity gaps and needs. It will strengthen the relevance of your assessment and provide better entry points for designing suitable responses. It will also improve the ownership of the learning process as such and reduce the risk of you being seen as "pointing fingers".

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

There is no "one model fits all" when it comes to building or strengthening capacity. What needs to be done depends on the result of your assessment. It is likely that you will need to apply a combination of tools and methods in order to tackle the different aspects of capacity and to achieve sustained impact with your efforts.

A genuine commitment from senior management to implement YPS is crucial. This will help sustain the YPS momentum and enable your work as a YPS Adviser. However, influencing *institutional will* can be difficult as it often will be outside your "sphere of control". It will not automatically be achieved through a single training session, meeting or discussion – especially if the senior management, or other key players, express resistance towards YPS. You will therefore need to be both strategic and patient.

A core part of building institutional will is about putting pressure on senior management and decision-makers by, for example:

- sensitizing management about YPS and emphasizing mandates and global frameworks during meetings and dialogues,
- demonstrating that the implementation of the YPS Agenda will benefit the organization at large,
- raising awareness and creating a "buzz" around YPS, both offline and online, and
- arranging dialogues between youth and decision-makers.

Institutionalizing a learning culture and establishing some forms of a knowledge management system is at the foundation of sustained *institutional knowledge.* This is especially relevant in contexts where staff rotation is high. You therefore need to apply a holistic and long-term approach to knowledge building and management.

You can do this by proactively creating opportunities for integrating learning in people's everyday work life. This can be achieved by for example:

- Crystalizing knowledge through thematic briefs, toolkits, etc.,
- Facilitating peer learning and reflection,
- Mentorship and technical advice (for example, reviewing a proposal and providing feedback).

Whenever you carry out training sessions, try to strategically spread out the facilitated sessions over an extended period and complement taught models with other tools such as mentorship meetings, peer working groups and assignments in between the sessions.

Allowing participants to practise the newly gained knowledge in real life situations and to reflect on their own learning will create more sustainable results. It will increase the likelihood that they not only increase their knowledge of *how* to do things but that they actually have put the knowledge into action. There is also a good chance that, when trainees interact with colleagues that are not part of the training session, there will be spill over effect in terms of knowledge transfer.

Strengthening *institutional opportunities* should be understood in terms of an enabling environment for sustained action. This includes ensuring that the appropriate means, resources and assets required for a collective, systematic and long-term implementation of the YPS Agenda are available and accessible. In your role as a YPS Adviser you can support this by, for example:

• Pushing for the integration of YPS into the mandate of the organization as well as in strategies, policies and programmes,
• Raising funds and lobbying donors to provide specific YPS funding mechanisms, and
• Establishing a YPS focal point system and facilitating inter-agency co-operation.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND BUILDING CAPACITY

By Maria Lundin, Learning Portfolio Manager at UNSSC

As someone working with designing and delivering courses, I am often approached by colleagues and partners looking for training in order to increase their, or their organizational capacity, on a given topic. The task of empowering people with skills and knowledge to contribute to a more effective, results-oriented and agile United Nations is a huge privilege and witnessing individual and organizational progress is truly inspiring. Needless to say, I believe in what I do.

However, sometimes, I think that training is *not* the immediate answer for effectively strengthening capacity. Do not get me wrong, training and learning is at the heart of what I do, but sometimes, the hurdle standing in the way of strong capacity seems to be related to the organizational environment, the priority given to the issue, or human and financial resources and lack thereof. So, before venturing down the road of training and learning, I try to first identify what specific change it is we want to see and why. Then, to backtrack from there and zone in on the cause of the issue – i.e. why this desired change is not happening now? I think it is only after this that we can find an answer to whether training is the most effective approach.

If the desired change is related to a lack of skills, then training can be a great way forward! If the problem relates to the environment/context, the motivation/priority or available resources, then other changes may need to take place before training can be an effective answer.

If training is the answer, then as a trainer I figure out how to help people learn and practice what they need to do. Here, I work with a few guiding principles: Show, don't tell. Practice, don't observe. Peer-exchange, not monologue. Practical, not (only) theoretical. Need to know, not "nice to know". Iterative, not definitive. Spaced out, not one-off.

And when it comes the often "two-steps forward one-step" back process of bringing about change, I remember Dag Hammarskjöld's words: *"Everything will be all right - you know when? When people, just people, stop thinking of the United Nations as a weird Picasso abstraction, and see it as a drawing they made themselves."*

Advising on YPS

Establishing a rapport and a relationship based on mutual respect is the most effective way to ensure your advice and contributions will be taken into account and have impact. But establishing a trustworthy relationship does not happen overnight.

While it is important to demonstrate your integrity, dedication and loyalty, it is equally important you do your best to provide good and concrete YPS advice throughout your assignment, based on evidence and analytical thinking.

CRAFTING MESSAGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE

A good starting point is to ensure that you invest enough time and energy to understand the context in which you are operating. If you have a solid base of analysis prepared, it enables you to effectively respond to the often-last-minute requests on time without compromising the quality of your advice. It will also help you develop clear and strategic messages and ensure consistency in your work and in your advice.

Whenever necessary, you need to be able to complement your recommendations with enough background information to demonstrate you have done your homework, and you understand what is happening, why it is happening, and how your recommendations will impact the situation.

To remain up to date you need to continuously collect information, analyse available literature, and conduct your own research and assessments. Reserve the time to talk to relevant people, reaching out to a broad range of stakeholders. All the information you are able to gather will help you to craft a solid situation analysis and some key specific messages regarding YPS.

Validating information by engaging different stakeholders in the process is good practice for a sound analysis. In this regard, make sure you invest time and energy in building your own personal network of diverse reliable and trustworthy contacts among young activists, youth leaders and youth-led organizations who can provide you with greater insights on the latest developments and act as a sounding board.

PROVIDING GOOD ADVICE

Good advice is a combination of extensive analysis of reliable and up-to-date information, with a solid understanding of the situation and an honest assessment of what can be done based on what is known. However, this wealth of information needs to be condensed, and become concise, simple and to the point.

Good advice needs to be frank and very clear about uncertainties and premises. It is better to disclose uncertainties upfront, instead of running the risk of providing incorrect advice based on wrong assumptions.

As organizations have their own mandates and strategic visions, sound advice needs to be grounded on the same strategic thinking and contribute to the organization's overall goals.

CRAFTING ADVISE ON YPS

When giving YPS advice, be mindful of who is on the receiving end and adapt your approach and style accordingly. At the beginning of your assignment, try to learn what is preferred or more effective for you and your counterparts.

Sometimes written comprehensive recommendations are more suitable while other times concise bullet points are the way to go. For some stakeholders, it might be better to jointly craft the way forward, while some will expect you to provide clear answers and suggestions from the get-go.

Some principals have very specific preferences for how they want to receive advice. It is in your own interest that the information you are trying to provide is shaped in a way that works for them. At the end of the day, the way you present the information may actually be the deciding factor for whether your recommendations are taken into account or not.

The styles will naturally vary significantly from assignment to assignment. Sometimes within the very same organization, you might need to employ a combination of approaches in order to leverage your impact.

Remain flexible in your approach and try to gather feedback from your counterparts to understand the structure they consider most useful. Whenever preparing your advice, try to consider:

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Understanding the issues or situation you are advising on	• What is the issue or situation in question? • Why is this issue relevant for the organization at this particular moment? • Is it relevant to young women and men? Why or why not? • How are young people experiencing or being impacted by the situation and/or issue? Are they experiencing it differently compared to other members of the community? • How have young women and men been engaged or involved in the issue or situation so far? • Does the issue present any opportunity or threat to the organization? What about to young people?
Understanding the context and organizational settings	• What is the context or setting in which this issue emerged? Do you have reliable and up-to-date information about contextual settings of the issue at hand? • Are there any contextual power dynamics or conflict dynamics that relates to the issue that you need to take into account? • How is the issue relevant to or affecting your organization and its objectives and mandates?

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Recommended action sand expected out-comes	• What are the main actions you expect to be taken? Who should take action? Who will be impacted by these actions? • What are the expected outcomes from this situation? • What would be the desirable outcome for your organization? Are these aligned with youth priorities and perspectives on the issues? Are there any conflict of interests or priorities?
Crafting recom-mendations	• Considering the different scenarios, what is your assessment of the best way to proceed? Why is this the best option? • Are there any concerns that are unique to specific youth constituencies, for example: marginalized youth, young women, LGBTI, etc. Would it be necessary to tailor recom-mendations accordingly? • Is your advice in line with the vision, mandate and objec-tives of your organization?
Analysing risks	• What are the risks involved with the different available options? Are there any conflict sensitivities that needs to be considered? • What are the possible negative consequences from each of the options? • What actions can help mitigate those threats?

You may find further guidance on how to prepare and deliver good political advice at FBA's "The Political Adviser's Handbook"[19].

BUILDING TRUST AND PREPARING ADVICE

By Susanna Dakash, YPS Specialist at UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub

Since 2016, I have worked on youth engagement and youth-led peacebuilding at UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, most recently as the Youth, Peace and Security Specialist. In my role as a regional adviser, I support a very diverse range country offices in the Europe and Central Asia region. There is still a lot to do in terms of creating meaningful ways for young people to participate in decision-making and to engage positively.

Building trust with different stakeholders starts with understanding their perspective. One of the biggest challenges I face is the narrative that decision-makers, policymakers and international actors themselves cultivate around young women and men. Oftentimes young people are seen as a problem to be solved, a threat that needs to be controlled, or as passive and disengaged and in need of better guidance. Another challenge is going beyond tokenistic engagement of elite youth, and making room for marginalized and hard-to-reach groups.

The key for youth-responsive policies, strategies and programmes is to start with solid evidence of young people's priorities. When you can show what the specific needs and ambitions of different groups of youth are, it is easier to get government and UN senior management on board. This is what we are doing in the Western Balkans, for example: together with a youth advisory group, we designed a study on peace and security involving the group in analysis and advocacy efforts. The results will be used for more targeted and bottom-up peace and reconciliation programming that takes into account the generation born after the past conflicts.

Overall, awareness of the YPS agenda remains low. Highlighting the global commitment to YPS and the importance of youth in sustaining peace has been crucial in getting buy-in for a topic that is not without

sensitivities in the region. What also helps is facilitating opportunities for resource mobilization around the youth agenda – concretely helping draft youth project proposals that are a solid reflection of YPS principles and inclusive of young people at all stages.

Building trust is also about bridging intergenerational differences and creating dialogue between youth and decision-making authorities. The more we are able to bring young people, in their diversity, to important discussions, the easier it is to find common ground to build on. Part of my advisory work, or the essence of it really, is to create space for and build the capacity of youth civil society to participate in dialogues, meet senior officials, design projects and implement them, and overall take the lead in making a difference.

Advising on YPS programming

Programming remains one of the most important elements of the work done by different organizations. It is through different programmes that policies and strategies become implemented and come to life.

Although there is an ever-growing field of youth programmes and initiatives implemented around the world, YPS-specific programming is still quite new and not yet at its full potential.

As the expert on the subject, your role will be to support your organization and the different programming teams in:
• Designing new comprehensive YPS programmes and initiatives,
• Rethinking current youth programmes and initiatives to include and strengthen YPS-specific elements,
• Integrating YPS elements into other broader ongoing programmes and initiatives that are not youth-specific (for instance, rule of law, security sector reform, etc).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY YPS PROGRAMMING?
YPS programmes can be structured in various ways, aiming to tackle different needs and reach specific objectives. However, all YPS programmes need to adhere to three important aspects: context, content and process.

THE CONTEXT
A YPS programme must be localized and grounded in the specific setting and context. Accordingly, programme teams need to carry out youth-sensitive context and conflict analysis before jumping into programming design. Unless project teams have a profound understanding of how youth experience, influence or are impacted adversely by the (conflict) situation, they run the risk of developing a skewed theory of change for the programme. This, in turn, will misguide the identification of outcomes.

THE CONTENT

Coherent youth, peace and security programming can promote inclusion, foster participation and help build and/or strengthen communities' social fabric. Therefore, YPS programmes are more comprehensive in scope than traditional peace and security efforts.

The need for youth, peace and security programming is not unique to crisis or conflict-affected contexts. In fact, the broad nature of the YPS Agenda offers an opportunity to address grievances and exclusions and to promote strong prevention approaches towards sustaining peace in a range of different settings.

Often, however, traction on the economic, political and social problems that drive conflict is gained through structural transformation associated with traditional development programmes. While this close relationship means that there are resources and strong partnerships available as a complement to peacebuilding efforts, project teams should be wary of falling into a common trap that assumes that all development or security work occurring in contexts affected by conflict support peacebuilding objectives.

More importantly, good YPS programming requires a carefully designed theory of change that can easily articulate how individual interventions will lead to peaceful outcomes, conflict prevention and strengthened security.

YPS programmes are not required to have young people as the main target group, nor should they be limited solely to "youth issues". Quite the opposite, young people do not live in isolation, so peaceful outcomes would benefit communities at large. However, an effort is required to ensure young people are not excluded and that they also benefit from the interventions.

THE PROCESS
When it comes to YPS programmes, the process used to design and implement initiatives is as important as the programme itself.

That means, in addition to ensuring that young women and men alike can benefit from the programme, teams need to create mechanisms and opportunities for young people to meaningfully engage throughout the project cycle, to develop their capacity and be empowered in the process.

A YPS programme should therefore strive to always include young women and men in the initiation, planning, implementation and evaluation of the programme. In addition, youth organizations should be considered and enabled to work as implementing partners on YPS initiatives.

The *context*, the *content* and the *process* are equally important when it comes to YPS programming. The bottom line is that it is not enough for the content (namely, what is being done with or for youth) to be youth responsive, unless the activities have been designed in collaboration with youth and adapted to their specific context and reality. Likewise, it is not enough that the planning process has been participatory if the implementation and evaluation of the project does not continue to be youth inclusive and responsive.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT
As the YPS Adviser, you most likely do not engage in direct project management. Instead, your role is to support teams who are leading on the initiation and implementation. The support includes the:

- provision of guidance in regard to programming gaps and opportunities,

- contributing to the analysis and contextual framing,
- helping to define a strong theory of change,
- crafting clear indicators and M&E frameworks,
- reviewing draft proposals,
- mobilizing funding and donor support, etc.

Whenever reviewing a proposal, it is helpful to observe a few aspects to ensure initiatives are relevant and coherent in relation to the overall strategic goals of the organization as well as the initiative's potential to have a sustainable impact. Some helpful assessment questions may include:

YOUTH-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING - ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Relevance	• Is the programme aligned with the principles and priorities of the YPS Agenda? • Is the programme responding to the needs and aspirations of young women and men? Have youth been part of identifying the needs and aspirations? • How will the programme contribute to the improvement of young people's participation in peace and security-related processes? • How will the programme contribute to peace and security in general? • Are there success stories and lessons learned from similar initiatives?
Effectiveness	• Is the program based on a youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis as well as a youth-responsive theory of change? • Are the identified outcomes of the program clearly linked to positive effects on peace and security? • Is the suggested programmatic approach the most effective way to achieve the identified outcomes? • How are youth being involved throughout the project cycle and in project management?

YOUTH-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING - ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	
Impact	• How will the programme impact wider policies, processes and initiatives? • How will the programme impact your own, or your partners' capacity and organization? • How will young women and young men benefit from the outputs and outcomes of the initiative long term?
Risks	• What are some of the ways that youth could potentially be negatively affected by this initiative? • Are there any risks for the young people who might participate in the initiative? Are these risks gendered? • What are the measures we need to have in place in order to mitigate those risks?
Sustainability	• Is the programme filling a gap? Or are there risks of duplication? In particular, is there a risk that the initiative may compete with already ongoing youth-led initiatives? • What are the strategies to ensure the initiative can continue beyond the funding cycle?

In your role as an adviser, you may be requested by donors to provide an opinion about YPS programming priorities, partners' performance, funding gaps and overall guidance on how they could best invest their resources in a strategic way. This is a golden opportunity for you to help shape, strengthen and diversify the portfolio of YPS programmes and initiatives within your context. It is also an opportunity for you to support with resource mobilization and to facilitate organizations to reach out and engage with possible donors.

In these instances, **whenever possible, aim to support and strengthen the work of youth-led organizations and initiatives as these seldom receive recognition despite impactful work.**

Because the YPS field is still emerging, there is also a need to test approaches and collect evidence on what works and what does not. In this regard, you play an important role in supporting teams to monitor implementation carefully and document learning and best practices that could be replicated or taken to scale.

Working closely with programme implementation teams will allow you to have a more accurate picture of what is happening in practice and who is doing what.

You can find further guidance on YPS programming and particularly on how to effectively develop YPS specific theory of change and outcome statements in the YPS Programming Handbook by the UN and FBA[20].

TRANSLATING THE YPS AGENDA INTO PROGRAMMING

By Fatuma Muhumed, Youth and Innovations Officer at UNFPA Somalia

I have been working on youth programming in East Africa for many years. So, when we decided to design a project for the Peacebuilding Fund's Youth Promotion Initiative, I thought it was going to be similar to the process of developing other youth proposals.

As soon as we started the process, one of our main challenges was to articulate a coherent theory of change. From the discussions with our youth partners, we already had an idea of what we wanted to do. But it took us quite some time to really understand how exactly each of our activities could directly contribute to peaceful outcomes. This process proved to be super important for the project. We were able to gather real clarity about the rationale behind each activity, which was helpful when we had to sequence and prioritize the various activities.

It became clear during the drafting process that even the young people sometimes reproduce some of the negative stereotypes and reinforce the simplistic narrative that idle youth equates as a threat to the community. The drafting process provided us an opportunity to discuss with young people and together try to debunk some of those policy myths.

During the discussions, we were also able to identify specific challenges that would hinder the meaningful participation of young women. It became clear that if we wanted young women to benefit from the initiative equally, we would need to invest extra efforts and create an enabling environment for them. As a group, we brainstormed strategies that would help us to support young women and ensure no one was left behind.

It was very important for us to be able to count on the full support of young people in the process of designing the proposal. Their engagement provided us with fresh ideas, and tailored solutions to leverage the

impact of the project. Because those youth-led organizations were part of creating the project, they assumed full ownership and worked alongside with us throughout the project implementation to ensure their vision was translated into action.

Reporting

Effective reporting has a direct impact on improving the quality and relevance of decision-making. Technical reports provide the analytical foundation that shape all political, strategic and programmatic decisions made by the organization. Therefore, another crucial aspect of the YPS Adviser role regards monitoring, reporting and information sharing.

The Adviser needs to monitor and document the YPS-related work done by the organization, partners and authorities, as well as the latest country trends and developments regarding peace and security in general. This information enables the Adviser to:

- Report on the implementation of the YPS Agenda at country level, which might include the latest developments in peace and security in the country, progress relating to YPS policies and programmes, etc.,

- Identify emerging YPS trends and recommend appropriate policy and programming responses,

- Mainstream a youth perspective and integrate YPS considerations into all other country level reports.

Effective reporting offers a concrete opportunity to establish a common narrative within the organization, which is crucial in order to align efforts and ensure policies and programmes are being implemented in a coherent way.

WHAT TO REPORT?
While the YPS Agenda will provide you with the scope of what to report, the organization's mandate will set the parameters for what to focus on and prioritize.

Although there is no set formula of what needs to be included in those reports, often, they include:
- Updates on the peace and security situation,
- Political events which may impact the work or the organization,
- New policies and legislation being discussed or adopted,
- Progress in programme implementation,
- Important milestones – such as key meetings, achievement of targets, etc.

At the end of the day, given the overload of information being produced by each organization on a series of different topics – including conflicting priorities, *you need to prioritize key information.* You must decide what will be included in the report based on the demand and your own sound judgement of what others need to know.

Given the dynamics in the field and frequent and extremely short deadlines, a good practice is to try to establish a reporting culture within your network of focal points from the very beginning. It is often easier to collect small and frequent updates from your counterparts than to expect them to find the time to prepare a comprehensive update whenever you are asked to provide input for a report.

If counterparts can provide you with frequent updates as they happen, it will be easier for you to consolidate information and develop your own analytical understanding of the latest developments and priorities.

Reporting does not need to be formal or heavy. Why not initiate a practice of meeting up with different focal points for coffee to catch up, and use other meetings as opportunities to stay up to date with the latest programming updates?

Nobody likes to report for the sake of reporting. Therefore, the best way to install a new reporting culture is to ensure that all counterparts

fully understand why the information is being collected, how it is going to be used and that they receive clear feedback and updates on the impact of their contributions. It needs to be a two-way relationship. The more you share information and keep counterparts informed, the more likely they will be to contribute accordingly.

In your reports, make sure to include nuanced information that reflects the diversity of perspectives and needs among young women and men which does not unintentionally contribute to reinforcing negative stereotypes.

Whenever possible, try to identify opportunities to include youth-specific information across the different sections and thematic areas. Integrating the YPS Agenda can be a powerful way to strengthen its cross-cutting nature and prevent lumping of all different "youth issues" into a single isolated section.

WHEN AND HOW TO REPORT?

Reporting is a strategic way to influence decision-making and therefore, you need to decide how to best use this tool. When you are working on a report, take into account these some basic principles:

- **Relevance** – Decide on what needs to be reported, ensuring it is relevant to the organization, the mandate and the readership.

- **Accuracy** – Make an effort to report accurate and precise information. Provide a clear disclaimer in case some piece of information cannot be verified.

- **Timeliness**– Ensure time sensitive information is reported accordingly. Strategically identify opportunities to report on issues that are not time-bound.

- **Brevity**– Ensure the report is brief, cohesive and to the point.

- **Credibility** – Provide a truthful account of the situation, even if there are sensitivities or negative results.

- **Action/policy oriented** – Make sure your report provides a clear course of action, translating the analysis into policy or action recommendations.

Different report templates will often require you to produce the exact same information in different formats. For example, while thematic briefings will provide you with the opportunity to be more analytical and comprehensive on your account, the weekly and monthly reports from the entire organization will require you to be succinct and consolidate all the information into a few paragraphs. For instance, in a report to the Security Council, different topics are allocated on only a couple of lines, which will force you to be strategic about what you prioritize to report.

Each organization has a unique reporting culture and often different organizations have their own internal guidelines and procedures for reporting. Because YPS is a fairly new agenda, it is likely it has not yet been institutionalized within the organization reporting requirements and procedures. Regardless, you should proactively seek opportunities to report progress and to integrate YPS information in other relevant reports.

Only recently, with Security Council Resolution 2535 (2020) the request for progress updates and a biannual report on the implementation of the YPS Agenda has been officially adopted. This means, at least for colleagues working for the UN, that there will be a growing need for comprehensive reporting to headquarters with regard to YPS.

Whenever you are working on a report, it is helpful to consider:

PREPARING A REPORT – THINGS TO CONSIDER	
Scope	• Who is the final recipient of this report? What needs to be considered in order to best tailor the report to them (for instance, in terms of length, language etc.)? • What depth of information can be included? • What is the relevant reporting period? • Who else needs to be involved in this process?
Intention	• What do we want to achieve with the report? • Should the report be mainly analytical or descriptive? • Are there next steps/follow ups required? • What action is expected from the recipient of the report?
Relevance	• What information is interesting and relevant for the intended recipients? • Would this information be easily available elsewhere? • Does it complement information previously shared?

Additionally, when you are working on a report, either drafting a YPS-specific one or contributing inputs to other institutional reports, asking yourself the following questions will help you strengthen the youth perspective:

ASSESSING A REPORT FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE	
Disaggregated	• Is the information about youth in the report evidence-based? • How are young women and men being described in the text? Is the narrative stereotypical, negative, positive or neutral? • Are both young women and young men visible in the text? • Is the diversity of the youth population depicted?
Inclusive	• Is a youth perspective mainstreamed throughout the report or is there a specific "youth chapter" that only deals with "youth-specific issues"? • Have young people been part of validating any recommendations presented in the report?
Responsive	• Is the language used in the report youth sensitive, responsive and transformative? • Is there any content in the report that could put young people at risk?

GETTING THE STORY ON THE RECORDS

By Mauricio Artiñano, Reporting Officer at the UN Verification Mission in Colombia

In July 2018, the UN Secretary-General's quarterly report on Colombia included -for the first time- a dedicated section on "Youth, peace and security," providing an assessment of how young Colombian men and women were contributing to peacebuilding efforts in their country. The practice of including a specific section on youth, peace and security (YPS) has continued in every subsequent Secretary-General's report on Colombia, which are presented every three months to the Security Council and focus on the implementation of the mandate of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia.

By reporting consistently to the Security Council on youth, peace and security, the Verification Mission has ensured that Council members are well-informed regarding youth engagement in the areas under the Mission's verification mandate. Several Council members have henceforth referenced youth issues in their individual statements in Council sessions, and the Council has included language on youth in many of its quarterly press statements on Colombia, which are unanimously agreed by all members. Reporting on YPS has also spurred Council action in other ways. For example, the Council invited a young Colombian civil society leader to address its April 2020 meeting on Colombia. This strong interest by the Council on youth, peace and security in the Colombian context is in large part a product of the Mission's decision to include the issue in the Secretary-General's reports.

By giving more visibility to YPS, our reporting to the Council also helped galvanize increased action on youth issues internally within the Mission, especially in our field offices. This was key considering the Mission has no dedicated resources or staff for YPS. In particular, when we reported to the Council on the adoption of our mission-wide YPS strategy and our

creation of a network of YPS focal points across our offices, our focal points in the field felt empowered and motivated to expand their outreach towards youth actors and increase activities related to YPS.

All three Security Council resolutions on youth, peace and security include requests to the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the Council information on youth participation in peace processes. UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions should consider seizing this request to report to the Council on their youth-related activities. Reporting is a crucial step in ensuring that youth issues receive the attention they deserve.

Representation

Official events provide you with the opportunity to directly engage with the public and mobilize support for the implementation of the YPS Agenda. They furthermore provide a useful platform to help you shape the narratives around young people, peace and security.

Different organizations have specific guidance and policies regarding who is authorized to represent and/or formally speak on behalf of the organization. It is necessary to familiarize yourself with those guidelines and comply with organizational policies.

Nevertheless, due to the specialized nature of your role, you will be perceived as an authority on YPS-related issues. Therefore, you might be requested to represent the organization to speak about YPS efforts at different events, conferences, press engagements and outreach activities. Remember, you are not a "youth representative", you may be a strong ally, but you represent an organization.

Whenever possible, **try to create a platform for young women and men to speak directly to the media themselves as well as in events and meetings.** Young people are often neglected and lack access to opportunities and to traditional media. As a YPS Adviser, make an effort and use all opportunities to amplify young people's voices and help their message to reach broader audiences.

PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

There are many different types of events you may find yourself at. They may vary from seminars to talks at universities, big national conferences or small thematic workshops.

Some of those events will be open to the public and the media. Therefore, your message must be aligned with the official narrative of your organization, consistent with institutional positions and messaging. Be mindful that information and reports from meetings

often circulate much beyond the intended audience, creating opportunity for misinterpretation and tensions. Whenever possible, invest time to review draft minutes and agreements for accuracy.

Consulting your team in advance is useful, in order to become aware of possible sensitivities which may emerge and establish a complete understanding of the institutional position and response.

After you attend an event, report back to your team and document key takeaways, contacts made and all relevant information of importance for institutional memory.

MAKING SPEECHES AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

Official speeches and statements must be carefully aligned with institutional policies and the organization's mandate. A lot of weight can be attributed to a statement, as it provides specific quotes which are considered an official position from a representative of the organization. Statements and speeches delivered are normally archived as part of the institutional memory of official positions and policies.

Whenever you are preparing for a speech, consider your intended audience and frame your messaging and tone accordingly.

In case you will be speaking in a panel or with other speakers, try to understand who they are and to anticipate some of the topics they will cover and the angle of their speeches. Whenever possible, prior to the session, try to fine-tune your speech with the other speakers. This is particularly important if you will be speaking together with other representatives from your organization.

SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA

Giving interviews and speaking to the media can be a great opportunity to get the message out and reach a wider audience.

However, such exposure also creates space for misunderstandings. Articles and interviews will often be viewed by different stakeholders who might diverge on their interpretation of what is being said.

In this regard, do avoid personal opinions, keeping your answers factual and evidence-based. Make sure that the media spotlight remains on the YPS Agenda and how it is been implemented, and not on you.

You can find more comprehensive guidance on engaging the media at the public diplomacy section of "The Political Adviser's Handbook"[21].

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms can provide you with a dynamic channel of direct communication with young audiences, decision-makers, influencers and the media. If you use these platforms professionally, be mindful that the content you post (including the content of your personal account), needs to align with your organization's ethics, principles and policies.

Particularly in conflict settings where in-person interaction can be limited, social media platforms become an important space to discuss ideas, engage with partners, report on projects and activities and promote the YPS Agenda.

Partnering with celebrities and "influencers", for instance, is becoming a popular strategy as it a cost-effective way to promote your message to larger audiences. Nevertheless, caution is required as it is harder to control the narrative since the messenger is somebody with her/his own voice, opinions and interests. It is especially problematic when influencers simultaneously engage in other affairs that are not aligned to or contradict the values and principles of your organization.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF REPRESENTATION

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU ARE PREPARING TO REPRESENT YOUR ORGANIZATION	
Authenticity & credibility	• Are the messages aligned with the positions, ethics and principles of my organization? • Are the messages aligned with youth priorities and perceptions? • Do we have enough evidence to support the message? • Is it possible to represent together with a youth counterpart?
Relevance	• What is the latest information on the issue? • Is the information relevant to my audience? • Are there ongoing debates, disagreements or sensitivities around the issue? • How is your organization's position on the issue? Is it in line with youth priorities and perceptions?
Clarity	• Is there a way to simplify the message you are trying to convey? • Is there concrete action or a request you are trying to convey with your message?
Follow-up & commitments	• What are the expected next steps? • Were there commitments made? Who will follow them through?

REPRESENTING THE ORGANIZATION

By Anastasia Fusco, Adviser on Youth and Security at the Office of the
OSCE Secretary-General

In my capacity of Adviser on Youth and Security at the Office of the
OSCE Secretary-General, I often represent the organization in meetings,
conferences, seminars and other fora. This is an enriching experience
thanks to which I directly engage with partners and colleagues from
across the organization on a number of topics.

In only 9 months, I delivered a speech in at least five conferences open
to delegations of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-
operation, as well as OSCE staff, representatives of other international
organizations and young people. Topics ranged from the role of young
women in peace and security efforts, the impact of COVID-19 on youth,
the prevention of drug use by youth through community policing, to
youth and human rights. I presented the work of the OSCE with and
for youth in more than seven youth workshops organized by colleagues
across the region. Moreover, partners regularly invite me to exchange
good practices and discuss potential collaboration, and young people
interested in working with the OSCE reach out to know more about
possible opportunities. Each of these encounters brought me to explore
specific aspects related to the youth and security agenda, opened up for
new perspectives and new inspiring opportunities. I also had to readapt
the approach to the new online format of events.

Representing the Office of the OSCE Secretary-General is a great
honour, but it requires extensive preparation. I always keep in mind
that my contribution must be aligned with the policies of my institution
and should reflect the organization's mandate. That is also why before
accepting an invitation I regularly consult with my management and team
to understand the added value of my potential participation, how this
would match the mandate of my office and whether I am the best person
placed to be the voice of the organization in that specific stance.

All in all, representing the organization is both a rewarding and learning experience. It is a privilege to provide a voice for your institution and further promote the youth and security agenda. By representing your organization, you have the opportunity to tailor YPS messages to different audiences and you get exposed to a vast pool of motivated and inspiring people.

Enabling youth participation

Meaningful youth participation is at the core of the YPS Agenda. Therefore, another crucial part of your role is to enable youth inclusion in decision-making and facilitate their engagement, and influence, in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, strategies, programmes, etc.

Young women and men have the unquestionable right to participate, and their meaningful engagement can be a strategic way to increase the relevance and the effectiveness of peace and security initiatives.

Beyond championing the YPS Agenda and ensuring the integration of a youth perspective into policies and programmes related to peace and security, your work also requires you to provide a platform where young people can speak for themselves and contribute with their own views and opinions.

MECHANISMS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION
There are different ways to enable the participation of young people both internally – in the inner works of your organization – as well as in society at large.

Engagement can occur at specific moments – such as in consultations or in the scope of a specific project. Or, it can be continuous, through the establishment of permanent mechanisms of youth participation such as Youth Advisory Boards, youth councils, periodic youth conferences, etc.

Regardless of the typology of young people's participation, it is crucial that you have a valid reason to engage young people. For their participation to be meaningful, they need to have the opportunity to raise their voices and influence decisions. It is also necessary to have a clear plan regarding the expectations and how their engagement

will work and what it will result in. Inviting young women and men to engage for the sake of engaging runs the risk of counter results, as young people easily identify when participation is tokenistic or manipulative.

In this regard, you may benefit from exploring different participation models[22], trying to identify what would work best in your specific context.

WHO TO ENGAGE?

Given the diversity of the youth population, consider the youth you engage with:

• Are they legitimate representatives of their communities?
• Do they represent any specific views, or societal group?
• Can they be considered privileged or marginalized?

Recognizing those different facets will be the first step to ensure real and representative youth inclusion.

Various intersecting identities of a young person – such as their gender, age, class, race, religious affiliation, sexuality, etc – may have a direct influence on the way their visions are shaped. Therefore, diversity among those you engage will increase and strengthen the understanding of the context from different points of view.

Some specific constituencies may require special measures in order to meaningfully engage. For instance, to ensure the participation of marginalized and "hard to reach" groups, you may need to provide young people with support for transport, translation or even childcare. Some young women may require having their own meeting space, while some young people will need to preserve their anonymity.

Make sure you consult the young people you are trying to engage to

really understand what their needs are, and what they expect from you in order to be able to meaningfully and safely participate.

WORKING WITH AND FOR YOUTH

One of the five pillars of the YPS Agenda regards partnership. As a YPS Adviser, understand the importance of not only working *for* young people, but especially the need to work *with* young people.

Establishing this two-way partnership with youth leaders, youth groups, youth networks and youth-led organizations can be a powerful way to accelerate YPS implementation while walking the talk.

Your ability to directly outreach and engage with young people will be limited in active conflict settings. In these contexts, forging alliances with youth-led organizations can be an efficient way to ensure progress and continued engagement.

Allowing youth-led organizations to act as implementing partners is also an opportunity to further build their capacity. It offers a unique opportunity for your organization to learn more about local practices and encourage innovation. Taken together, these efforts contribute to increasing the impact in the long term.

DO NO HARM CONSIDERATIONS

When working with young people, it is imperative that the "do no harm" principle is strictly observed. You must be fully aware of cultural, social and political sensitivities and take all necessary measures to reduce and mitigate any risks young people endure due to their engagement in your initiatives.

You should also be mindful that some young people might be reluctant to or would prefer not to engage in your efforts. Unfortunately, negative experiences of exclusion, abuse and manipulation may have contributed to a mistrust of international organizations. **You must**

recognize the validity of such fear or reluctance and proactively seek ways to regain trust and encourage participation.

Lastly, in harsh and resource-scarce realities where international organizations often operate, support to select actors can be perceived as sensitive and/or political. Support to partner organizations, the organizing of training sessions, the distribution of material support as well as the provision of any other resources may contribute to tensions and conflict. A comprehensive youth and gender-sensitive conflict analysis can help you mitigate some of those threats.

Whenever you are planning to work with young people, there are some important considerations to be taken into account, including:

WHEN ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN, CONSIDER:
How are young people currently engaging in the context? What youth-led organizations, projects, networks and initiatives are already ongoing? Would they be at risk if you, as an international organization, approach them?
Do the young women and young men you are trying to reach have the desire to be included in your initiative? If not, what might incentivize them?
What kind of support (operational, capacity, etc) might be needed to enable the full and meaningful participation of young men and women in the process?
How to ensure an inclusive process that does not marginalize (even if unintentionally) certain groups based on their gender identity, race, ethnical or linguistic background, religious affiliation, disability status or other distinctions?
Are there opportunities for young people and youth-led organizations to engage as implementing partners in your initiative? Are those opportunities equally accessible for young women and young men?

WHEN ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN, CONSIDER:

Are the young people we are trying to engage with coming from the same or similar backgrounds? If yes, what could be done to widen/diversify the young people reached?

Are there any risks young people may be exposed to if they are perceived to be engaging in your initiatives? Are those risks gendered?

Are there any cultural or social biases and barriers that might prevent or jeopardize the participation of young women in particular? If yes, how can we address them?

ENABLING MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION

By Julius Kramer, YPS Specialist at FBA and Sanaa Kareem, Public Information Officer and Youth Adviser at UNAMI

Young people constitute the majority of the population in Iraq but have limited opportunities having grown up in a country devastated by war. Their rights and needs have been long neglected which has created widespread mistrust towards public and international institutions.

In order to restore social fabric and dialogue among Iraqi youth and government officials, as well as further the institutional implementation of the YPS Agenda, it became clear that we needed to create opportunities for sustained dialogue.

Different partners including FBA, UNFPA and UNAMI, started to work with Iraqi youth groups to establish permanent avenues for young people to engage in decision-making.

FBA and UNFPA facilitated the process of building an Iraqi Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security, starting with a joint meeting between young peacebuilders, Ministries and UN agencies. Since then, youth and non-youth have co-led the project, from design to implementation. Prior to the launch of the youth-led coalition, thousands have engaged with the coalition through social media and youth-led consultations.

Meanwhile, UNAMI, in coordination with government entities, conducted the workshop series "Iraqi Youth: Pioneers for Dialogue and Stability", gathering young people in each Iraqi governorate to provide space for them to engage with decision-makers.

Through these processes, we learned the importance of:
• Building on existing networks, initiatives and the expertise of young peacebuilders, and ensuring young people's leadership at each stage of the process, enabling the organic formation of a community.

- Clarifying the purpose and level of ambition of any participation mechanism: providing advice in relation to a formal process or entity, or serving as a self-organized coalition of the willing?
- Continuous efforts to inform, educate and manage expectations of public institutions, to clarify their role and responsibilities.
- Early coordination and co-operation among actors, to ensure common understanding and complementarity of efforts.

5. Good practices & examples

YPS STRATEGIES

Developing a YPS strategy is a powerful way to articulate different efforts, programmes and initiatives into a strategic and integrated framework. YPS strategies articulate the vision of individual organizations or more broadly, they can represent a shared vision of a group of stakeholders, such as inter-agency country teams and multi-stakeholder coalitions. A clear and defined strategy provides valuable guidance that will help to maximize coverage, impact, and ensure sustainability of YPS interventions. The process of bringing together relevant stakeholders to agree on a common strategy provides ample scope for harmonizing approaches to policies and programming. The UN Verification Mission in Colombia and the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) are two examples of country-wide YPS strategies that have been developed so far.

YPS NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

A comprehensive YPS national action plan (NAP) strengthens the national ownership of the agenda and provides a clear roadmap of what needs to be done. It usually consists of an operational plan, with a clear definition of activities, outputs and outcomes. The NAP also defines who are responsible for ensuring the implementation of each of those tasks. Efforts to develop YPS national action plans are currently ongoing in Jordan, Iraq and Finland.

YPS NATIONAL COALITIONS

The establishment of YPS national coalitions provide an opportunity to promote a true multi-stakeholder partnership crucial to build and sustain momentum for the YPS Agenda. YPS coalitions create a platform for coordinating different actors and their various efforts, promoting collaboration and building on synergies. Coalitions have been established in various countries and structured in different ways. Examples include: Jordan Youth Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition, U.S. YPS Coalition (#Yes4YPS), Youth Peace and Security Coalition in Sri Lanka, Canadian Coalition for YPS, to name a few.

At global level, the Global Coalition on YPS facilitates the exchange, coordination and collaboration between civil society organizations, donors, academia and inter-governmental actors. More information about GCYPS is available at www.youth4peace.info

YPS FOCAL POINTS NETWORK

Establishing a network of YPS focal points is a simple and cost-effective way to create a support system and to facilitate the mainstreaming of a youth perspective into the work of different teams and thematic areas. It provides staff working across the organization with a platform to share experiences, brainstorm ideas and collaborate in new initiatives. OSCE executive structures have appointed youth focal points from across the secretariat, institutions and field operations. Those focal points ensure timely coordination and are a powerful platform for disseminating information. In the UN, some country teams have already established Inter-Agency Reference Groups on Youth, while at global level, the different UN YPS focal points meet under the umbrella of the Global Coalition on YPS.

YPS PROGRESS REPORTS

Documenting progress in the implementation of the YPS Agenda is an effective way to consolidate evidence on its impact and to advocate for the scaling up of investments. Such reports are more analytical and provide an opportunity to articulate how different programmes and initiatives have contributed to the implementation of the YPS Agenda. Creating a powerful narrative can help to convince organizations about the benefits of integrating YPS into their current programming. For instance, the UN in Somalia prepared an annual inter-agency report on how current programmes contributed to the implementation of resolution 2250 in the country. The report strengthened the argument that YPS is an integral part of individual mandates and helped to mobilize support from senior leadership and donors. With SC resolution 2535 requesting periodic reports on YPS implementation, YPS progress reports will be the standard and part of the overall reporting requirements of organizations.

YPS-SPECIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Publishing YPS studies, thematic reports and policy briefs can help to diversify and strengthen the literature and evidence about this emerging field. These publications offer an opportunity to present the YPS Agenda through the lenses of different organizations, which helps provide an understanding of how the YPS Agenda relates to different agendas, frameworks and mandates. They can also provide insights as to how the YPS Agenda has been translated into country-specific contexts. An example is the OSCE discussion paper "Engaging Youth for a Safer Future", which is the result of a series of discussions with a group of 22 young experts from the region, who identified six critical security areas that the OSCE should prioritize in the coming decade. Other thematic reports by different organizations can be found at www.youth4peace.info

YPS TRAINING

Raising awareness about the YPS Agenda and strengthening the organization's capacity to implement the Agenda is crucial. Designing and running YPS training sessions can be an effective way to achieve that. FBA has been working with partner organizations to strengthen YPS capacity in the ground. For instance, YPS programming training sessions were organized in Somalia to help UN staff to integrate YPS into their programming and strengthen proposals to the Peacebuilding Fund. With the OSCE, regional youth focal points received training to better understand the YPS Agenda and how it is linked directly to OSCE's work.

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARDS

Young people's rights to participate in decision-making are highlighted in the YPS Agenda. Therefore, the establishment of participation mechanisms is crucial as it enables meaningful and sustained participation. Mechanisms such as youth advisory boards, where young women and men get the opportunity to directly contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring

and evaluation of strategies, policies and programmes can help to improve the relevance and effectiveness of your organization. OSCE executive structures for example, have established consultative youth mechanisms that provide a channel for regular engagement between young people and OSCE staff. The UN is also investing in the establishment of such advisory mechanisms at country and global levels.

YOUTH INCLUSION IN PEACE PROCESSES
The inclusion of young women and men into formal and informal peace processes can be decisive in ensuring lasting peace. The inclusion of youth representatives in peace committees create a formal platform for inter-generational dialogue and provides young people with the avenue to voice their concerns and contribute to conflict resolution. There are opportunities to also engage young people as community mediators and support efforts to mobilize and engage their peers. Experiences such as the establishment of the Joint Galkayo Youth Committee in Somalia are among some of the experiences featured in the Global Policy Paper: We are Here[23].

YOUTH INCLUSION IN ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEWS
The annual security review conferences organized by OSCE create a permanent space for regional dialogue on security challenges. They provide participating states with the opportunity to take stock of progress on politico-military dimensions and exchange information and co-operation with relevant partners. Young people have the opportunity to engage in and shape the discussions and deliberations regarding security priorities and challenges. OSCE mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has successfully enabled youth participation through panel discussions and by creating opportunities for youth representatives to engage in direct dialogue with security sector authorities.

6. About the authors and contributors

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Erike has served as a YPS specialist and team leader at the Folke Bernadotte Academy since 2018. She is responsible for thematic development and manages the Agency's global projects on YPS. Erike has many years of experience working with young people's participation in peacebuilding, statebuilding and democratization in countries affected by conflict. In 2010 she initiated the still ongoing *Program for Young Politicians in Africa*, a capacity-building leadership programme targeting political youth wings in 16 countries in Africa. Based on her unique experiences she has served as an external adviser to the UN concerning young people's formal political participation. In previous roles, Erike has also worked on youth employment and disaster risk reduction in Somalia. Erike has a background as a youth activist in Sweden. She has, among other things, started, and led youth organizations and networks in her home municipality.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

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8. Endnotes

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2   Hagerty, T. 2017. Data for Youth, Peace and Security: A summary of research findings from the Institute for Economics and Peace, (September 2017). Institute for Economics & Peace. [Online] Available from: https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-04/16.%20TP_Youth%20affected%20by%20violent%20conflict_IEP.pdf

3   United Nations Security Council. 2015. Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, S/RES/2250 (9 December 2015). [Online]. Available from: https://undocs.org/S/RES/2250(2015)

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5   United Nations Security Council. 2020. Resolution 2535 on Youth, Peace and Security, S/RES/2535 (14 July 2020). [Online]. Available from: https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2535(2020)

6   *All references to Kosovo in this text, whether to the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

7   Simpson, G. 2018. The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security, (July 2018). United Nations. [Online] Available from: https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy

8   The "violence of exclusion" presented in the Independent Progress Study refers to the forms of violence that young women and men experience when they face structural (social, political, cultural and economic) and psychological exclusions. The systematic exclusions that young women and men are exposed to often leads to grievances and the mistrust of governments and communities. In worst cases, some young people and/or youth groups may turn to violence or extremism in an attempt to be heard.

9   Altiok, A. and Grizelj, I. 2019. We are here: an integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes, (April 2019). United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. [Online]. Available from: https://www.youth4peace.info/node/348

10   It is common to apply the "3 tracks" approach in peacebuilding initiatives, which establishes that government officials and high-level decision-makers represent "Track 1", organized civil society actors represent "Track 2" and local grassroot communities and populations are called "Track 3". Rather than trying to place young people into one of those tracks, the "We are Here" policy paper presented a layered framework that helps to understand where and how young people participate formally and informally in peace processes. The layers recognize that young people are able to contribute and influence peace processes even when they are not given a seat at the formal negotiating table.

11   Twin resolutions: United Nations General Assembly. 2016. Resolution 70/762 – Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, A/RES/70/762 (27 April 2016). [Online]. Available from: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_262.pdf and United Nations Security Council. 2016. Resolution 2282 on the Peacebuilding Architecture, S/RES/2282 (27 April 2016). [Online]. Available from: https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2282(2016)

12   United Nations General Assembly. 2016. Resolution 70/762 – Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, A/RES/70/762 (27 April 2016). [Online]. Available from: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/general-assembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_262.pdf

13   More information on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and its resolutions area available from: https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security

14   Altiok, A. and Grizelj, I. 2019. We are here: an integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes, (April 2019). United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. [Online]. Available from: https://www.youth4peace.info/node/348

15   Further information about the United Nations Security Council meetings on the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (YPS Briefings) are available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_FvYZpfcbs (23 April 2018), https://www.youth4peace.info/node/349 (17 July 2019) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2FApVuEz8M (28 April 2020).

16   VicHealth. 2018. (En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives. Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. [Online]. Available from: https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/13-steps-to-tackle-gender-discrimination#

17   Organizations define the "do no harm" principle differently, but it can be simplified as an effort to take into consideration the unintended consequences of programmes and policies. In order to "do no harm" you must recognize potential negative effects of interventions and be mindful of the impact of your initiatives not only on beneficiaries but also the wider community and the social fabric. Last, but not any less important, you protect and ensure the quality of the relationships with beneficiaries and all stakeholders.

18   Folke Bernadotte Academy, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs. 2020. Youth, Peace & Security: A Programming Handbook, (December 2020). [Online]. Available from https://www.youth4peace.info/

19   Wesslau, F. 2013. The Political Adviser's Handbook. Folke Bernadotte Academy. [Online]. Available from: https://fba.se/contentassets/93df04725706423eab79b-b5e2bb2040e/fba_handbook_webb.pdf

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22   For more information on different participation models, a good starting point is: Karsten A. 2012. Participation models: Citizens, youth, online. A chase through the maze. [Online]. Available from:
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