

## Final Report

### Strategic Review of FBA’s Capacity Development Support through the Realizing the YPS Agenda Online Course

#### Executive Summary

##### **Purpose and Scope**

This strategic review assesses the outcomes, effectiveness, and relevance of FBA’s support to the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, with particular focus on the *Realizing the YPS Agenda* online course and complementary modalities including the YPS Primer, Training of Trainers (ToT), mentoring, and joint FBA–UN learning forums. The review further evaluates the alignment of these outcomes with Sweden’s 2024–2028 strategic priorities and examines implications of FBA’s expanding engagement with the European Union.

##### **Methodology**

The review applied a hybrid approach, combining outcome harvesting and process tracing to identify and analyze results at individual, organizational, and contextual levels. Evidence was derived from a document review, a global participant survey, key informant interviews, and participant observation.

##### **Key Findings**

- The online course was found to be a powerful contributor to participants’ knowledge, awareness and access to tools to advance the YPS agenda. Alumni widely applied course-derived knowledge and skills across conflict analysis, program design, youth engagement, mission planning, and policy development. This contributed to changes in practice that, in several contexts, were associated with improved inclusion and responsiveness to youth priorities.
- The most transformative outcomes occurred when individual learning coincided with enabling institutional conditions—clear mandates, leadership support, and opportunities for collaborative action.
- The ToT and joint learning forums consistently generated deeper and more durable results than standalone training modalities, functioning as catalysts for organizational change.
- Foundational learning remains essential, but growing demand now requires more advanced, thematic, and context-responsive support.
- EU staff demonstrated strong individual-level gains, but systemic uptake remains limited due to weak institutional mandates and inconsistent policy direction.
- Documented outcomes strongly align with Sweden’s strategic priorities on conflict prevention, stabilization, inclusive governance, and democratic participation.

##### **Conclusions**

FBA occupies a unique and highly valued position within the global YPS ecosystem. Its training and support modalities have proven effective, relevant, and strategically significant—deepening institutional capacity, shaping regional and national strategies, and strengthening Sweden’s visibility and influence as a principled leader on inclusive peace. Sustaining and enhancing this leadership, however, will require

adapting FBA's support models to better match evolving partner needs, reinforce institutional uptake, and strengthen country-level pathways for impact.

## **Key Recommendations**

- Continue and enhance the *Realizing the YPS Agenda* course to meet continued global demand for structured, high-quality YPS learning.
- Expand thematic and advanced learning offerings to address emerging needs, including climate security, digital information ecosystems, and PVE-related dynamics.
- Scale and institutionalize the ToT model across additional regions to strengthen local ownership and expand regional facilitation capacity.
- Institutionalize joint learning forums as recurring mechanisms for cross-organizational problem-solving, coordination, and strategic planning.
- Reframe mentoring as an institution-embedded or group-based modality rather than a one-to-one model to improve sustainability and institutional alignment.
- Strengthen institutional mandates, systems, and internal guidance to enable consistent uptake of YPS commitments across partner organizations, especially through partnership with the EU.
- Align YPS support more deliberately with Sweden's strategic priorities, particularly its focus on country-level impact, stabilization, and inclusive governance.
- Increase access to financing pathways within multilateral organizations, governments, and civil society to support operationalization of youth-inclusive processes.
- Consolidate and expand FBA's role as a global knowledge leader by producing synthesis products, strengthening partnerships, and curating accessible tools and evidence on YPS practice.

## **Introduction**

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) has played a leading role in supporting the operationalization of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, in line with UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 and its subsequent resolutions. Since 2020, FBA has partnered with the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) to deliver the "Realizing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda" online course, designed to strengthen institutional capacities for YPS implementation across the UN system, regional organizations, civil society, and national institutions.

After five years of implementation, FBA commissioned this strategic review to assess the longer-term outcomes of its capacity development efforts and the contribution of the online course and related support modalities – including mentoring, regional learning forums, and the Training of Trainers (ToT) initiative – to advancing YPS outcomes at country, regional, and institutional levels.

The review was conducted against the backdrop of significant shifts in Sweden's foreign and development policy, moving from the 2017–2022 Strategy for Sustainable Peace toward the 2024–2028 Strategy for Peace, Security, and Stabilization and the Strategy for International Civilian Crisis Management and Peace Promotion. These new strategies emphasize strengthened national security, stabilization, and concrete country-level outcomes. Given this context, the review examines both the effectiveness and continued relevance of FBA's support to the realization of the YPS agenda, with explicit attention to its alignment with current Swedish Government priorities.

## **Purpose and Scope of the Assignment**

The ToR presented four broad questions meant to investigate outcomes of the course at the individual and organizational levels, and at the contextual level to the extent possible given data constraints. In addition to generating evidence of outcomes, the ToR included additional questions to determine whether achieved outcomes are aligned to national and organizational strategic priorities, and to ascertain to what extent FBA has carved out a role as a thought leader on advancing the YPS agenda. Specifically, the ToR tasked the review team to:

1. Assess how course alumni have applied the knowledge and skills gained, and to what extent, if any, this has translated into tangible action and progress on YPS implementation within their respective spheres of professional influence.
2. Assess whether FBA's additional capacity development support to select course alumni – such as mentoring, advisory support, and participation in joint FBA-UN learning forums – has added value or contributed to further outcomes related to the operationalization of the YPS agenda within their specific operational contexts.
3. Reflect whether the course's content and format – along with FBA's related support activities – are fit for purpose in addressing the current needs of multilateral, national, and civil society actors working to operationalize the YPS agenda at the country level. Where relevant, provide suggestions for improved alignment, in line with FBA's current priorities.
4. Assess the course's strategic contribution to positioning FBA as a knowledge broker on YPS, including a review of existing internal estimations and an expert analysis of how the course may have enhanced FBA's visibility, credibility, and role within the broader YPS community, both as a thought leader and as a collaborative partner.

The review also reflects an expanded scope, following a request on 17 October 2025 to analyze the contribution of FBA's partnership with EU institutions to advancing the realization of the YPS outcomes.

## **Methodology**

The review applied a hybrid methodology combining outcome harvesting and process tracing to identify, verify, and assess results associated with FBA's YPS support. These approaches enabled the review team to identify both intended and unintended outcomes, assess plausible causal pathways, and analyze enabling and limiting contextual factors. Data collection tools deployed for this review included:

- The team conducted a desk review of documents related to the structure, content, and delivery of the online course across all cohorts from 2021 to 2024, as well as materials on the 2023 Training of Trainers, mentoring support, and FBA-sponsored learning events. The review also included relevant policy documents and evidence of YPS initiatives launched by course participants, such as project reports, strategies, and National or State Action Plans.
- An online survey was administered to 210 participants across the noted cohorts, generating a 17% response rate. Survey responses provided key insights into alumni learning, examples of applied skills, and previously undocumented local initiatives, and also informed the selection of interview participants.<sup>1</sup>
- Key Informant Interviews were conducted with 26 participants, including alumni identified by FBA, survey respondents who reported concrete outcomes, individuals representing the case study typologies, EU staff, and ToT alumni. Interviewees spanned the UN, EU, OSCE, NATO, civil society, and government institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey data were collected and analyzed using the SurveyMonkey platform. Due to account-level limitations, anonymized raw datasets could not be exported for annexing. Findings are therefore presented in aggregated form, triangulated with key informant interviews, document review, and participant observation.

- The team also conducted participant observation during the EU’s Second Youth, Peace and Security Conference and YPS Week (12–14 November 2025), gathering real-time insights into institutional dynamics and stakeholder perspectives. In addition, the review included comparative analysis of other YPS capacity-building initiatives, along with an assessment of how FBA’s support aligns with national and organizational strategic priorities.

The sampling approach combined full-universe survey outreach with purposive interview sampling. The survey aimed for maximum inclusivity, while KIIs were guided by a cluster analysis developed during the inception phase. Five cluster types were identified based on institutional and geographic patterns across the cohorts, ensuring balanced representation for outcome analysis. Sampling of participants examined outcomes for contexts that fall into the following categories:

**Table 1. Frequency distribution of contexts and organizational affiliations of participants across cluster types**

Contexts with a single participant across all cohorts	Contexts with multiple participants from a single organization over time	Contexts with multiple participants from diverse organizations	Contexts with a high concentration of participants (eight or more) over time
31 contexts	18 contexts	22 contexts	5 contexts
20 UN	46 UN	48 UN	98 UN
10 CSO	6 CSO	13 CSO	3 EU
1 OSCE		5 NATO	1 FBA
		2 Regional Orgs	4 CSO
		18 EU	
		10 FBA	

### **Brief Overview of FBA YPS Initiatives**

#### **Joint FBA–UNSSC Online Course**

A flagship component of FBA’s support to the advancing the YPS agenda is the joint online course developed with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), which provides foundational knowledge on the YPS agenda and equips practitioners with practical tools for implementation. Its six modules cover core YPS principles, key UN Security Council Resolutions, and global tools such as the YPS Programming Handbook. The blended format combines self-paced learning with facilitated webinars, supporting cross-organizational understanding. Participants who complete the required modules receive certification. The course takes place over several months, with an estimated three to four hours of weekly self-study. Since the course’s launch in 2021, FBA has sponsored 120 participants in the course and received fee waivers from UNSSC for 30 additional participants. Sponsored participants have included headquarters and field staff in various UN offices, EU institutions, civil society organizations and other partners. While the nomination of individuals was left to the participating organizations, FBA identified selection criteria to target specific regions and organizations that reflected priorities related to other YPS initiatives, such as participation in joint FBA-UN learning forums.

#### **YPS Primer**

Given the demanding nature and cost of the online course, in 2021, UNSSC and FBA launched a fully self-paced course, the YPS Primer, which exposes participants to the core principles and entry points for the YPS agenda but does not include facilitated exchange among course participants or tailed guidance

from experts and trainers. This course, which is available for free in six languages (Arabic, English, French, Georgian, Spanish, Portuguese), takes approximately five hours to complete.

### OSCE Mentoring Programme

Alongside the online course, in 2021, FBA piloted a mentoring program with the OSCE, designed to strengthen the institutional capacity of an OSCE staff member, the Adviser on Youth and Security in the Office of the Secretary General. The six-month long mentorship accompanied the staff member’s participation in the full online course and offered dedicated technical guidance to enable the staff member to translate course objectives into OSCE-specific YPS training tools. The aim of the mentorship was to ensure that OSCE staff had access to learning opportunities to advance their knowledge of how the YPS agenda could be advanced through the OSCE’s mandate.

### Training of Trainers

FBA’s Training of Trainers targeted UN staff and partners in the Eastern Partnership region and was delivered jointly with UNFPA and UNSSC. Held in Tbilisi in November 2023, the ToT aimed to decentralize YPS expertise and strengthen regional learning capacity. It combined completion of the YPS Primer, preparatory webinars, and a five-day in-person workshop focused on facilitation, inclusive pedagogy, and designing YPS learning sessions.

### Learning Forums

FBA has facilitated several cross-organizational learning forums that bring together UN and partner practitioners for joint analysis and planning. Forums held in Sandö and Amman supported exchanges on regional implementation, promising practices, institutional bottlenecks, and collective action points. The 2023 Arab States Forum contributed directly to shaping the draft League of Arab States Regional YPS Strategy, while the 2024 Mission Settings Forum focused on integrating YPS into mission planning, leadership engagement, and data systems.

### EU and YPS

FBA has expanded its engagement with the EU, including support to the development of the CSDP YPS mini-concept, the first internal guidance for integrating YPS into Mission work. FBA has sponsored EU staff participation in the course since 2023 and co-organized the Second EU YPS Conference and YPS Week in 2025, strengthening collaboration and visibility within EU structures.

**Table 2. Distribution of participants’ organizational affiliation across cohorts**

Organization	2021	2022 Spring	2022 Fall	2023	2024	2025 <sup>2</sup>
UN	59	41	18	37	56 <sup>3</sup>	19
EU				6	9	8
CSO			13	6	5	10
FBA	2	2	3	3		1
OSCE	1					
Regional		1	3			1
Government			3			
NATO			1	2	2	

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of outcomes presented in below in the findings section largely focus on cohorts prior to 2025 in order to capture changes over time after participants’ engagement with course materials.

<sup>3</sup>A large portion of the record high number of UN staff members taking the course in 2024 reflects a decision by the UN Mission in South Sudan, to make the course available to an unprecedented 36 staff members. As such, 2024 is an outlier and the increase in UN representation should not be interpreted to be indicative of a broader pattern.

## **Review Findings**

The findings presented in this section synthesize evidence gathered through document review, survey data, key informant interviews, participant observation, and process-tracing–informed analysis of contribution pathways. Taken together, the evidence shows how FBA’s support to the YPS agenda has translated into individual learning, organizational change, and broader contextual outcomes across diverse settings. The findings are organized thematically to highlight patterns in knowledge and skills acquisition, application of learning, institutional enablers and barriers, the added value of complementary modalities, relevance to practitioner needs, alignment with Swedish strategic priorities, and FBA’s evolving role as a global knowledge broker.

**Question I. Assess how course alumni have applied the knowledge and skills gained, and to what extent, if any, this has translated into tangible action and progress on YPS implementation within their respective spheres of professional influence.**

### **Individual-level learning from the course**

Survey and interview evidence indicates that course alumni gained new knowledge, skills, and analytical capacities that deepened their understanding of the YPS agenda and strengthened professional competencies in peacebuilding, governance, and youth engagement. In the global survey, 80.5% of respondents reported learning a great deal, and 16.7% reported learning a moderate amount.

**Conceptual understanding.** Across organizations and regions, participants described the course as a clear and structured introduction to YPS, strengthening understanding of the normative foundation in SCR 2250 and its operational relevance. Even those already familiar with youth engagement frameworks reported that the course systematized their knowledge and helped distinguish YPS from general youth programming or peacebuilding. The course clarified how the agenda connects to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and governance, emphasizing the five pillars of participation, prevention, protection, partnership, and disengagement/reintegration. For many, this provided their first comprehensive overview of YPS as an integrated framework, rather than a series of isolated youth initiatives. Participants in policy and coordination roles noted that the course clarified how YPS connects to peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and governance through the five pillars of participation, prevention, protection, partnership, and disengagement and reintegration. Many also reported improved their understanding of how YPS complements WPS and broader inclusion approaches, particularly around meaningful participation, protection, and institutional accountability.

In addition to conceptual grounding, the course introduced participants to the policy ecosystem underpinning YPS, including national and regional strategies, UN and partner agency guidance, and coordination mechanisms. They learned to navigate these frameworks and to situate their own work within global and regional commitments. This was particularly relevant for participants from the UN, who came to better understand how YPS priorities are embedded in organizational policy instruments, program cycles, and peacebuilding frameworks, while EU colleagues noted that greater integration of EU policy frameworks, planning instruments and experiences within course examples and exercises would help them better translate core course principles into their organizational setting.

**Analytical and technical skills.** The most frequently cited skills gained through the online course were analytical and design-related competencies that allowed participants to better understand, assess, and plan youth-inclusive interventions. The below outlines the ways in which individuals felt the course contributed to their knowledge and skill on YPS. Evidence of concrete outcomes of these improved

skills and knowledge at the individual, organizational or contextual levels will be provided below in Section Q I.B and C.

*Conflict Analysis:* Participants reported that the course strengthened their ability to conduct or contribute to youth-responsive conflict analyses, using structured approaches to identify the roles, needs, and capacities of young people in peace and conflict contexts. This evidence, derived from KIIs, affirms survey responses in which 61% strongly agreed and 33% agreed that they had improved their skill in conducting youth-inclusive conflict analyses. Many respondents described this as new territory and appreciated that the course provided tools to help them think systematically about youth as agents of change rather than as beneficiaries or risk factors.

*Program Design and Integration Skills:* Course alumni gained practical knowledge on how to integrate YPS principles into peacebuilding and governance programs, including how to define objectives, indicators, and participation strategies that reflect youth perspectives. They became familiar with examples of YPS programming approaches and cycles, from context assessment to project formulation and monitoring. This included exposure to examples of how national and regional YPS frameworks are operationalized, and how to adapt them to different institutional and political settings. A number of respondents noted that they have applied these new skills to design and implement peacebuilding projects funded by the UN's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), underscoring the importance of partnerships between capacity building initiatives and key funding agents to advance the YPS agenda.

*Consultation and Engagement Methods:* The course provided concrete guidance on how to organize inclusive and meaningful consultations with young people, ensuring diversity in gender, geography, and social background. Participants learned participatory techniques to engage youth in program design, risk assessment, and peacebuilding activities. For many, this represented a shift from top-down engagement to a more participatory, co-creation approach.

*Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:* Several participants highlighted that the training improved their understanding of how to measure youth participation and empowerment within peacebuilding initiatives. The modules introduced practical ways to incorporate age-disaggregated data and outcome indicators into MEL frameworks, which many identified as a new and valuable technical skill.

**Communication, advocacy, and collaboration.** Alumni reported increased confidence in articulating YPS rationale using evidence and terminology grounded in the framework, including communicating with senior managers, donors, CSO partners, and government counterparts. Several described this as a new and empowering ability to translate normative commitments into convincing arguments for institutional action.

The course's interactive components, including group exercises, plenary exchanges, and collaborative assignments, also built peer learning and greater appreciation for different conflict settings. Learners practiced explaining YPS principles, debating case studies, and analyzing complex scenarios in small groups. These exercises strengthened their ability to engage in structured dialogue and reflective practice, fostering analytical thinking and teamwork. The exposure to peers from diverse regions and institutions further expanded their understanding of the varied interpretations and applications of YPS, enhancing their cross-cultural communication and comparative analysis skills. Peer learning and the interactive nature of the course methodology, moreover, offered opportunities for participants to establish or build a network of like-minded colleagues, although many KII responses highlighted that more could be done to help foster continued networking and peer-to-peer exchanges.

**Pedagogical and methodological insights.** Participants frequently cited the course’s blended approach as a distinguishing strength. Even those initially skeptical of online learning reported that modular design, scenario-based exercises, and guided assignments supported internalization and real-world application. Some participants from non-UN multilateral and regional organizations noted that the course introduced systematic learning approaches they had not previously encountered, including problem-based learning and reflective questioning, which influenced how they now think about capacity development.

### **EU-specific learning outcomes**

Starting with the first participants from the EU to take the course in 2023, a total of 26 EU staff members had completed the online course by late 2025. Alumni span institutions and roles, from EEAS and CSDP functions in Brussels to Missions and Delegations, reflecting the EU’s varied mandates and staffing profiles.

Across EU interviews, participants consistently described the course as highly valuable and, for several, among the strongest professional learning experiences they had undertaken. Many entered with limited prior exposure to YPS and reported emerging with a clear conceptual foundation and practical tools. One colleague based in an EU Delegation in Kenya described the course as “very methodical and easy to follow,” emphasizing that it accommodated different levels of expertise and strengthened her ability to apply YPS in EU programming. Two headquarters-based alumni working on inclusivity in policy and programming instruments rated it the best course they had taken for content, structure, and facilitation, with one describing it as “being back at university... in the best possible sense.”

EU participants echoed wider feedback on the course’s blend of theory and practice, including mock scenarios and applied exercises. They highlighted strengthened competence in youth-sensitive conflict analysis, with the EUAM Ukraine human rights adviser noting a shift in how she maps risks, identifies youth-specific drivers, and integrates youth concerns into advisory work. Participants also described gains in youth-responsive program design, including theory-of-change thinking, monitoring frameworks, and risk mitigation for meaningful participation. Many emphasized improved ability to operationalize a YPS focal point role by integrating YPS across existing policy streams such as WPS, CAAC, human rights, and non-discrimination. Finally, participants noted a more strategic understanding of EU policy entry points, enabling them to identify where YPS could be integrated into policy documents, advisory workflows, and mission reporting formats.

### **Translating learning into practice**

Participants emerged from the Realizing the YPS Agenda course with high confidence in their ability to act, a finding reinforced by both survey and interview data. Survey respondents reported strongest confidence in conducting youth-responsive conflict analyses and designing youth engagement strategies. Interviewees attributed this to “clear operational frameworks,” “usable tools,” and a “shared language” that helped them introduce YPS perspectives in policy development, program design and implementation, communications, and internal advocacy.

This confidence translated into practice. Ninety-two percent of respondents reported applying course learning, including using youth-sensitive analysis tools, strengthening youth engagement strategies, adjusting community engagement processes, revising program designs to reflect youth priorities, and ensuring YPS considerations were reflected in policy and planning documents and briefings to senior leadership. The evidence indicates participants not only felt prepared to act but also converted learning

into concrete shifts in how they analyzed conflict, designed engagement, and framed institutional priorities.

Sustained, transformational action, however, depended on enabling conditions. Participants consistently reported that momentum was maintained when organizational mandates, leadership backing, and funding streams aligned with youth-inclusive approaches and provided operational space to integrate YPS into planning, programming, policy and staff training. Where mandates were rigid, resources constrained, or leadership turnover reordered priorities, participants struggled to convert individual learning into lasting institutional change.

### **Illustrative outcomes and enabling conditions**

In Nigeria, an area-based manager in UNDP who specializes in livelihoods programming described entering the course with limited knowledge of YPS and credited the course for providing an important blend of both theoretical grounding in the foundations of the agenda as well as the practical guidance and tools to implement it. Specifically, she increased her skill in designing and facilitating inclusive consultation and validation processes with young people, noting that prior to the course, she and her colleagues had identified policy gaps and programmatic entry points in a vacuum, basing decisions on their own knowledge of the Nigerian context without input from the young women and men who would constitute their ultimate stakeholders. The stress within the online course on meaningful partnership with young people at every stage of implementation encouraged her to become a strong advocate within her office on processes that are more inclusive of and accountable to young people. She operationalized these newfound tools and approaches by leading the design, validation, and adoption of YPS State Action Plans (SAP-YPS) in Nigeria's Kaduna and Katsina States, implemented with funding from the UN Peacebuilding Fund. In both States, the project facilitated the drafting and validation of SAP-YPS strategies, with Katsina's draft validated by the Ministry of Youth and Kaduna's SAP-YPS finalized and launched in 2024. While the UNDP-facilitated process included longstanding partners such as the National Commission on Youth and larger CSOs, based on learning from the course the alumna also reached directly to community-based youth groups and included them in consultations and validation exercises. By championing their inclusion, moreover, the staff member was able to shift internal and external partners' stereotypes of young people from security risks to forces of positive change and social cohesion. The staff member credited the FBA course with sharpening her ability to design inclusive processes, engage youth meaningfully, and embed gender and conflict-sensitive analysis into the strategy's development, all of which ultimately increased the strategies' relevance and legitimacy among young people.

A contrasting pattern emerged in the OSCE. A staff member completed the course and participated in the Sweden-linked mentorship initiative launched in 2022 to develop training modules for incoming staff and youth focal points in OSCE field missions. Although she finalized the modules in 2023, the initiative stalled after she moved into a new role as Gender Specialist in 2024. The participant linked this backsliding to structural constraints: no OSCE unit held a clear mandate to own the modules or the YPS agenda while the only post fully dedicated to YPS was no longer resourced once she shifted roles.

OSCE's annual rotating chairpersonship, moreover, has produced peaks and valleys of support to the YPS agenda, depending on the commitment of the Member State chairing the organization. When a Member State with a clear commitment to YPS has the helm, as Sweden did in 2021, initiatives such as the joint OSCE-FBA mentorship and subsequent development of OSCE-specific training modules have taken root. As the chairpersonship rotated to others in subsequent years, however, competing organizational commitments and budget constraints impeded full uptake of these nascent gains. YPS gained traction within the OSCE yet again in 2025, however, as Finland took up the chairpersonship and

drove a youth-inclusive process to develop an OSCE YPS Roadmap. This reshuffling of priorities from year to year underscores the importance of securing less discretionary, more durable operational, political and financial commitments to sustain meaningful organizational change in support of young stakeholders.

When senior leadership support, clear organizational mandates, and explicit institutional priorities align with strengthened staff capacity, FBA-supported actors have been able to drive genuinely transformative change, as evidenced by the experience of a course alum in the MENA region. As a conflict prevention specialist, the course alum described taking up a new post in UNDP's MENA Regional Office in 2022 with limited familiarity with YPS. His supervisor encouraged him to complete the YPS Primer to support the League of Arab States Regional YPS Strategy process, which arose from an FBA-facilitated regional learning forum in 2023. He then represented UNDP on a technical support team with UNFPA, DPPA and FBA that helped shape the strategy. He then leveraged that work to secure support for a UNDP MENA regional YPS strategy and led its design while taking the full online course in 2024. His ability to receive support and guidance from FBA at key moments in strategy and planning stages enabled him to take advantage of windows of opportunity to produce new strategies that have helped UNDP drive the development of NAPs and other YPS work at country level. The UNDP regional strategy, moreover, has continued to offer important organizational guidance and commitment in his new role as Youth Coordinator in the UN's Integrated Office in Somalia. By leveraging commitments made in the UNDP regional strategy, he has been able to advance the design of Somalia's NAP through inclusive consultation processes that have reached diverse youth. His experience demonstrates the powerful results that can be achieved when organizational architecture, leadership vision, and individual capacity development come together, enabling staff not only to act on the YPS agenda but to shape its direction at both regional and national levels. Throughout all of these inflection points, FBA's support in the form of regional learning forums, access to the Primer and facilitation of the Realizing the YPS Agenda course proved critical, without which these gains could not have been made.

### **Additional UN and government outcome snapshots**

A UNDP Headquarters Youth Policy Adviser who assumed the Global YPS focal point role in early 2024 stated, "I'm unsure what I would have done without the course," describing how it supported her to influence youth-inclusive programming and policy change, including ensuring specific YPS priorities were reflected in UNDP's new Strategic Plan. Embedding YPS at this high organizational level provides clear signals and entry points to both senior management and partners alike and smooths the way for her and others to implement concrete initiatives.

In Moldova, an Inclusion and Social Cohesion Specialist with UN Women stated, "The course taught me that we need to develop meaningful partnerships with young people at all stages instead of taking top-down, paternalistic approaches and lecturing them." She applied this learning to support a CSO partner to shift from top-down delivery to meaningful youth partnership. Drawing on course methods such as mock scenarios and role play, she provided practical guidance on consultations and inclusive strategies. Their support ultimately helped young people establish a network of youth peacebuilders who have subsequently gone on to launch advocacy campaigns to influence the stalled peace process.

In Colombia, a former UNDP Youth and Governance Specialist used course tools to launch capacity-building initiatives for UN staff and youth-led CSOs. To sustain the YPS foothold built during her tenure, she established a Youth Engagement Coordination Mechanism that has continued under UNFPA and UNICEF facilitation since her departure. The mechanism coordinates UN actors on Colombia's NAP, conducts youth consultations at key design, reporting and evaluation moments, and advocates for a youth focus within UNCT work.

In Sierra Leone, a government official applied course learning to lead development of a Grievance Redress Mechanism addressing conflict between youth and mining companies over land rights, labor and employment. The mechanism created a peaceful channel for complaints linked to natural resource management and helped address stressors identified by young women and men, in a context where protests had previously escalated and resulted in deaths and property destruction.

In Sudan, a former DPPA desk officer and current youth focal point in the SRSB's Office used course learning to ensure young activists' perspectives are reflected in Track 1 and Track 2 peace processes and related preparatory work, and to sensitize colleagues on youth-inclusive approaches. Highlighting the course's emphasis on the role of young people in all their diversity, he credited the course with giving him the awareness and tools he needs to better support groups of young activists who hold divergent political views. In a context of shrinking resources, moreover, he urged continued support by FBA, noting that durable peace outcomes depend on sustained investment in the capacity and understanding of key actors, not one-off initiatives.

In Malawi, a UN Women Program Specialist credited the course with strengthening his technical ability to contribute to Malawi's NAP, including integrating gender differences and intersectionality so the experiences of young women were reflected. He also reported streamlining a youth perspective throughout PBF and WPHF-supported programming and strengthening partners' ability to develop, implement, and report on youth-responsive strategies. He noted that his new skills have been particularly valuable in supporting partners to more visibly create youth-responsive strategies, and in ensuring that these strategies are effectively implemented and adequately captured in reporting processes.

In West Africa, a Gender Affairs Officer in UNOWAS described how the online course, combined with participation in the 2022 Sandö learning forum, supported establishment of a regional inter-agency network for UN YPS focal points. Through this network, she and colleagues supported young people to develop the 2025 Dakar Compact of Young Women and Men of West Africa and the Sahel and its action plan, translating principles of inclusion, justice, resilience, participation and innovation into commitments for governments, civil society and partners. She continues to apply course learning, including partnering with the University of Cabo Verde to launch a week-long training for young people from West Africa and the Sahel.

## **EU-specific outcomes**

Within the EU, the strongest evidence of impact lies in concrete changes to day-to-day practice reported by participants.

At headquarters, a gender and inclusivity specialist described systematically embedding YPS considerations into EU policy documents and briefings.

In the EU Delegation in Kenya, a member of the Foreign Policy Instrument Regional Team for East and Southern Africa traced a direct line between course learning and the design and launch of the EU's first YPS project in Ethiopia that applied a more consistent and solid YPS approach. She reported that course tools for conflict analysis and meaningful youth inclusion led her to broaden the project's scope to strengthen sustainability, including support for community peace committees and youth participation mechanisms. By the end of the first phase, hundreds of youth peacebuilders had been trained, contributing to dialogue structures and alternative livelihoods in conflict-affected regions. She also described steering the second phase toward preventing election-related violence, applying the analytical

and program-design approaches emphasized in the course, alongside wider results such as community dialogue platforms, rapid response mechanisms, and trauma-healing initiatives.

In Ukraine, an EUAM adviser reported using course learning and the EU mini-concept to integrate YPS into mission planning and due diligence processes. Specifically, the adviser cited the ways in which the course built her capacity to conduct a youth-informed conflict analysis and translate the analysis of conflict and peace dynamics into solid theories of change for programming that responds to young peoples' needs. By leveraging the learning she gained through the course as well as the policy support afforded by the EU's mini-concept, she has been able to include youth-sensitive risk analysis within Technical Review Committee workflows, stakeholder consultations that systematically include youth-led CSOs, and alignment of YPS with WPS and CAAC workstreams, ensuring that cross-cutting safeguards are reinforced rather than siloed.

In Georgia, an FBA secondee to the EU Monitoring Mission reported revising mission reporting templates to become more youth-sensitive and initiating internal discussions on adapting monitoring practices to better capture youth perspectives within a monitoring mandate.

In Armenia, a mission Gender Adviser described how the course motivated a conceptual shift toward direct engagement with youth, including proposing a Youth Sounding Board as a way to move beyond reliance on NGO interlocutors. She linked this proposal to momentum created by an outgoing adviser who was a 2023 course alum and credited the course with strengthening her resolve to advocate for more deliberate youth engagement.

**Question 2. Assess whether FBA's additional capacity development support to select course alumni – such as mentoring, advisory support, and participation in joint FBA-UN learning forums – has added value or contributed to further outcomes related to the operationalization of the YPS agenda within their specific operational contexts.**

The review finds that FBA's additional capacity-development modalities generated markedly different levels of added value depending on their alignment with organizational priorities, institutional incentives, and opportunities for collective action. Modalities that combined self-paced learning with structured, in-person engagement, notably the ToT and joint FBA-UN learning forums, were consistently described as the most effective. These approaches created clear purpose, enabled senior-level buy-in, and provided platforms for networking and collective problem-solving, allowing participants to immediately apply learning, co-develop strategies, and sustain peer support. By contrast, one-to-one mentoring of a single staff member in an organization without a strategic YPS commitment lacked these reinforcing conditions and struggled to generate lasting change.

**Training of Trainers (ToT).** The ToT was designed as a layered, multi-stage process to prepare participants from the South Caucasus, Western Balkans, and Central Asia to facilitate YPS learning in their own contexts. It combined completion of the YPS Primer, two preparatory webinars, and an intensive five-day in-person training in Tbilisi focused on facilitation skills and applied YPS tools. Furthermore, as part of the ToT, participants committed to delivering a YPS training or workshop in their respective operational contexts within six months of the in-person training in Tbilisi. Participants consistently praised the quality of facilitation, highlighting how the preparatory sessions built rapport, a shared language, and confidence prior to the in-person week. Facilitators actively encouraged cross-regional exchange, which participants described as energizing and instrumental in forming early professional connections.

The ToT produced clear and tangible outcomes. In Georgia, participants translated the YPS Primer into Georgian, supporting uptake within the UN Country Team and informing national youth policy processes. A Georgian civil society organization cascaded the ToT model by delivering YPS trainings to young people in all nine university towns. The ToT also generated a sustained cross-regional network: participants continued collaborating beyond the training, including UNDP colleagues in Georgia supporting Western Balkans and Cyprus initiatives and assisting peers in securing PBF Phase II funding for a regional YPS project. These results demonstrate that the ToT strengthened facilitation capacity while enabling diffusion, replication, and peer-supported implementation across regions.

Overall, evidence shows that the ToT model has been an effective and efficient modality, delivering country- and regional-level results while fostering durable networks. Its success stems from its layered design: requiring completion of the Primer ensured a strong knowledge base; the pre-training online sessions set a dynamic tone, stimulated early motivation, and established a sense of community; and the in-person week-long training workshop strengthened participants' ability to deliver compelling YPS trainings and deepened interpersonal trust. Importantly, the group-based, multi-country approach offered strong value for money by training a cohort of actors who have since continued supporting each other, contrasting sharply with the more limited, individualized effects generated by the self-paced online course alone. The ToT therefore stands out not only for enabling specific initiatives on the ground, including direct engagement with conflict-affected youth, but also for cultivating a long-term, self-sustaining network of practitioners who perceive one another as knowledgeable partners and who jointly advance the YPS agenda across diverse contexts.

**OSCE mentoring programme.** The OSCE mentoring programme was conceived as a six-month institutional capacity-building initiative to support operationalization of YPS through structured outputs, including training curricula, analytical tools, and guidance materials. The design combined self-study, twice-monthly mentoring sessions, and a learning-by-doing approach embedded in the mentee's workplan. Early session notes confirm that the programme initially functioned as intended, with structured feedback on draft outputs.

However, evidence points to significant shortcomings. After the third module, the mentee reported a sharp decline in mentor engagement, with limited responsiveness and eventual disengagement, leaving her to complete the remaining modules independently. Although the mentorship initially helped structure early work and identify relevant resources, the latter half relied entirely on the mentee's efforts, without substantive feedback or validation. As a result, a programme intended to last six months extended to a year, with diminishing FBA involvement.

Overall, the review finds that while well designed, the one-to-one mentoring model was not an effective use of staff resources in this context. Such approaches are time-intensive and depend on protected time, sustained engagement, and strong institutional prioritization. Placing responsibility for organizational change on a single staff member within an institution lacking a clear YPS mandate proved unrealistic and unsustainable. Evidence suggests that future mentoring should be considered only where strong institutional commitment to support YPS exists and should adopt a networked model that distributes responsibility and reinforces peer learning.

**Joint FBA–UN learning forums.** The joint FBA–UN learning forums provided structured, purpose-driven spaces that brought together staff from multiple UN entities, regional bodies, and country teams to address strategic and operational barriers to YPS implementation. The joint forums were designed to encourage open exchange, co-planning, and problem-solving, supported by hands-on methodologies, participatory facilitation, and pre-forum preparatory learning, including completion of the YPS Primer to ensure common language and baseline knowledge among participants. The 2024 mission-settings forum,

for example, strengthened understanding of mandate-based YPS obligations and generated concrete recommendations related to leadership engagement, data systems, and resourcing in peacekeeping and special political missions. Across these forums, carefully selected participation brought together actors working on similar issues across different operational settings, enabling collective diagnosis of structural barriers and – equally as important – a shared commitment to address them. Highlighting FBA’s unique ability to draw together actors from a range of roles and perspectives, a UN staff member working in West Africa reflected, “We were five colleagues coming from the region and [the learning forum] gave us an opportunity to form strong working relationships and build a network in ways we unable to before.”

These forums produced clear organizational and regional outcomes. In the Arab States, the Sandö forum was described as the catalytic moment for initiating the League of Arab States Regional YPS Strategy, followed by sustained collaboration among UNDP, UNFPA, DPPA and others. A subsequent MENA regional forum brought together focal points from Jordan, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Libya, and Tunisia, establishing a network that remains active, including recent peer-to-peer support between Libya and Somalia on YPS design. Participants consistently reported returning to organizations with endorsed follow-up actions, political backing, and concrete workstreams such as national action plans, regional frameworks, or mission strategies.

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that the combination of well-facilitated joint learning forums and structured access to the Primer and online course has delivered deeper, more durable outcomes than the online course alone. Participants repeatedly emphasized that the forums created the institutional conditions needed for the course to have practical impact: they returned from the events with organizations that were now prioritizing YPS, senior managers who had endorsed specific follow-up actions, and concrete initiatives, such as national consultation processes, strategy development, or regional coordination mechanisms. These organizational commitments provided the practical and strategic impetus through which they were able to channel their online learning. This stands in sharp contrast to situations described by alumni who only took the online course and lacked an organizational entry point, resulting in limited ability to apply the tools or mobilize institutional support. The forums also generated sustained professional networks that continue to reach across regions and mandates, enabling ongoing cross-country accompaniment, the exchange of tools, and practical peer support, effects that have directly strengthened operationalization of the YPS agenda. By combining collective problem-solving with targeted preparation and structured follow-up actions, the joint learning forums have functioned as strategic accelerators for institutionalizing YPS within the UN system.

In summary, the most impactful FBA-supported initiatives were those that functioned as crucibles, bringing together trained practitioners, institutional mandates, and leadership endorsement. The joint FBA-UN learning forums and the ToT stand out for their clear objectives, blended delivery, and ability to generate sustained operational change, delivering value well beyond what individual training modalities could achieve alone.

**Question 3. Reflect around whether the course’s content and format – along with FBA’s related support activities – are fit for purpose in addressing the current needs of multilateral, national, and civil society actors working to operationalize the YPS agenda at the country level. Where relevant, provide suggestions for improved alignment, in line with FBA’s current priorities.**

The review finds that FBA’s core support modalities, including the online course, the Primer, training-of-trainers, and learning forums, have been both effective and relevant. These interventions were deliberately designed in response to a joint FBA–UN evidence-based needs assessment conducted in the

early years of the YPS agenda, which identified extremely low awareness and limited technical capacity among UN staff to operationalize Security Council resolution 2250. At that time, policymakers, funders, and program staff struggled to translate normative commitments into action. FBA's early investments directly addressed these gaps by establishing foundational skills, shared language, and basic operational understanding across the system.

Now, ten years after the adoption of SCR 2250, the central question is whether this support remains fit for purpose. Evidence from surveys and interviews indicates that while FBA's foundational support continues to be valued, the needs of UN and partner institutions have evolved. Respondents consistently noted that the original focus on awareness-raising and basic technical capacity remains necessary due to high staff turnover, uneven institutional buy-in, and the continued perception of YPS as vague or secondary. Several participants stressed that the course remains the only structured resource available to CSOs and government counterparts with little prior exposure to youth-responsive approaches. At the same time, respondents across regions and institutions emphasized that future support must move beyond foundational learning toward more tailored, thematic, and context-responsive approaches anchored in collective processes.

A first major finding concerns the limitations of individual-focused training. Interviewees repeatedly cautioned that when capacity-building targets single staff members, institutional knowledge is easily lost through rotation or political turnover, particularly in government settings and UN missions. Participants described how trained individuals often lacked allies to advance YPS internally, especially in institutions ambivalent about their mandate. As a result, respondents advocated for whole-of-institution approaches that embed YPS within organizational procedures, promote alliance-building, and sustain capacity despite turnover, including clearer guidance on integrating YPS into other strategic priorities.

A second consistent theme is the need for thematic deepening and technical specialization. Participants identified gaps in areas such as preventing violent extremism, climate security, natural resource management, social cohesion, and digital technologies, where youth engagement is widely recognized as essential but remains difficult to operationalize. Feedback from contexts including Somalia, the Pacific, and the Caucasus underscored demand for advanced, issue-specific support that enables practitioners to translate YPS into politically salient and emerging priorities. Respondents emphasized that this evolution should complement, not replace, foundational training.

Participants also highlighted the importance of contextual adaptation and agility. Experiences from Colombia, Georgia, Syria, and the Pacific illustrated how rapidly shifting political conditions, civic space, and conflict dynamics render static approaches insufficient. Respondents consistently called for regionally grounded training and adaptable tools that allow practitioners to recalibrate YPS initiatives as contexts change.

Several interviewees further noted that course content often assumes programmatic roles that do not reflect the diversity of participants' functions. Mission observers, senior managers, and policy staff emphasized that guidance must be relevant not only to implementers, but also to those responsible for strategic leadership, coordination, and mandate interpretation. Adapting content to reflect these varied roles was seen as essential for sustained relevance.

Resource constraints emerged as a decisive barrier. Nearly half of survey respondents observed that host governments are more receptive to YPS when funding is available. Participants repeatedly stressed that training alone is insufficient without resources to apply learning, citing limited small grants, underfunded national action plans, and weak support for CSO-led youth initiatives. Without financing, even highly motivated and well-trained actors struggle to translate commitments into practice.

Finally, respondents emphasized the need for more coordinated, multi-actor engagement, pointing to the challenge of fragmented approaches, particularly where powerful multilateral organizations act independently of others or superficially engage the YPS agenda. Coordination among key actors was found to be particularly critical in highly volatile settings, where ensuring a Do No Harm (DNH) approach and finding ways to maximize scarce resources is essential. Many interviewees proposed joint training at country or regional level around concrete objectives, arguing that shared purpose fosters collaboration, reveals the relevance of the YPS agenda in practice, and helps overcome institutional silos.<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with findings from earlier sections of the report showing that the most meaningful outcomes arise from group-based, purpose-driven engagements rather than isolated individual training.

In sum, FBA's support to the UN and its partners remains relevant but requires strategic evolution. Foundational training continues to be valued, especially for new staff, but sustaining impact will require greater thematic specialization, institutional-level engagement, adaptive tools, stronger links to financing pathways, and closer alignment with concrete operational processes as the YPS agenda enters its second decade.

### **EU-Specific Findings: Strong Individual Gains, Limited Structural Traction**

Evidence from EU participants indicates that the FBA YPS course has been relevant and effective at strengthening individual knowledge and practice across a wide range of roles, from Brussels-based policymaking to mission-level advisory and monitoring functions. Participants described applying YPS learning in accession reports, policy briefs, mission reporting, due diligence processes, and stakeholder engagement in contexts including Ethiopia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Armenia. At the same time, EU staff emphasized that relevance would increase with stronger tailoring to the EU institutional context, including greater use of EU policy frameworks, case studies, and speakers. Several noted that UN-centered examples limited applicability and that more balanced representation within existing modules would improve uptake across EEAS, CSDP missions, and Commission services.

Despite these individual-level gains, structural constraints limit transformational impact. The absence of a binding EU-wide YPS policy imperative was consistently identified as the most significant barrier. While the EU Youth Action Plan and the CSDP Mini-Concept on YPS provide useful signals, neither creates mandatory obligations. As a result, YPS competes with other cross-cutting priorities, leading some participants to describe it as an optional add-on rather than a core requirement. Interviewees emphasized that meaningful institutional change would require formal directives, such as Council Conclusions or operational guidance and commitments by the Member States, that clearly articulate expectations for Delegations, Missions, and thematic units.

This lack of authoritative direction also enables backsliding. In Armenia, once a staff member who had driven YPS integration rotated out, momentum was lost and mission-level engagement diminished. Similar risks were identified in other CSDP missions, where high turnover, often every six or twelve months, has made it difficult to consolidate learning, maintain institutional memory, or sustain new practices. This dynamic is exacerbated by the fact that mission mandates often emphasize monitoring, political analysis, or security functions, rather than programmatic work, meaning staff must reinterpret how YPS fits within non-programmatic mandates, an effort that is difficult to sustain without strong institutional backing. In sum, without clear policy guidance, progress will continue to rely on isolated

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<sup>4</sup> While joint training around a shared purpose was consistently raised as a need, several respondents cautioned that inviting government actors into training with CSO representatives or organized youth must be done in a conflict-sensitive manner that takes DNH as a paramount consideration.

initiatives and individual motivation rather than systemic commitment. Without strong institutional backing, staff struggled to reinterpret YPS within non-programmatic mandates and sustain progress over time.

At the same time, interview data illustrate the positive compounding effect of group learning. Units with two or three course alumni reported stronger reinforcement of learning, collaborative application of YPS approaches, and more consistent contributions to internal policy and analysis. These experiences demonstrate that even in the absence of binding policy, clustered training can generate localized momentum and practical evidence to support broader institutional change.

Overall, EU findings highlight both the value and the limits of capacity development in the absence of formal policy commitment. While FBA's support has clearly strengthened individual practice, sustained and system-wide impact will depend on clearer institutional mandates that move YPS from discretionary engagement to an embedded organizational priority.

**Question 4. Assess the course's strategic contribution to positioning FBA as a knowledge broker on YPS, including a review of existing internal estimations and an expert analysis of how the course may have enhanced FBA's visibility, credibility, and role within the broader YPS community – both as a thought leader and as a collaborative partner.**

The Realizing the YPS Agenda course, together with FBA's complementary support, has emerged as one of FBA's most significant strategic assets for positioning the agency as a global knowledge broker and thought leader on Youth, Peace and Security. Across interviews, respondents consistently emphasized that the course has increased FBA's visibility, strengthened its credibility, and enabled it to occupy a role within the YPS ecosystem that no other actor currently fills. Several practitioners noted that this positioning carries not only reputational value for FBA, but also strategic relevance for Sweden's broader foreign policy objectives.

While FBA has long viewed the course as a vehicle for disseminating its expertise, interview data provide a more externalized assessment of its impact. Staff working within international organizations and rule-of-law institutions described FBA's outputs as inherently authoritative, noting that affiliation with the course gave them added legitimacy to mainstream YPS considerations into internal training, induction systems, and programmatic guidance. Others, particularly from organizations with limited in-house YPS expertise, highlighted their reliance on FBA to provide a rare combination of conceptual framing, practical tools, and high-quality facilitation. From this perspective, FBA was repeatedly identified as the primary institutional reference point for operationalizing Security Council resolution 2250 and subsequent YPS resolutions.

The online course, moreover, has advanced FBA's role as a thought leader in other ways. Participants cited FBA's involvement in key knowledge products such as the YPS Programming Handbook, regional guidance notes, and practical tools for policymakers as indicators of its intellectual leadership across the YPS field. Because course alumni consistently rely on FBA resources in their day-to-day work, FBA's visibility is reinforced each time these guidance materials circulate within UN entities, regional bodies, and government partners. This dynamic creates a multiplier effect: the course builds a constituency of trained practitioners; those practitioners draw on FBA-supported tools and methods; and their use of those materials expands FBA's authority and influence within their institutions.

FBA's convening power, evidence through joint FBA-UN learning forums and in-person workshops, was also cited as a major contributor to its strategic standing. Respondents from multilateral agencies, NGOs, and government partners stressed that few institutions possess FBA's neutrality and credibility

to convene political, programmatic, and civil-society actors across regions. The Realizing the YPS Agenda course, YPS Primer, ToTs and learning forums together have enabled UN and regional actors to integrate youth-responsive conflict analysis and YPS-sensitive strategies into peacebuilding frameworks, regional strategies and national action plans. As noted above, participation in the online course and the 2022 Sandö learning forum enabled UNOWAS staff and regional colleagues to establish an inter-agency YPS network that supported the development of the 2025 Dakar Compact of Young Women and Men of West Africa and the Sahel and its action plan, translating principles around inclusion, justice and resilience into concrete commitments for governments and partners. These steps contribute directly to Sweden's objective of strengthening conflict prevention mechanisms and creating conditions for return and stability in conflict-affected areas and consolidate inclusive peace gains in the GoS's priority region of the Sahel. Learning forums such as these were consistently described as difficult to replicate for fostering trust, peer exchange, and shared agendas.

Similarly, FBA's support has helped multilateral organizations embed Swedish priorities on prevention within their own policy architectures. The MENA regional learning forum and subsequent technical support to the League of Arab States (LoAS) contributed to the design of a Regional YPS Strategy, which a course alumnus then leveraged to develop a UNDP MENA regional YPS framework and, later, to drive inclusive NAP processes in Somalia. These outcomes exemplify strategy objective 3 in the peace and stabilization strategy, using Swedish-funded capacity building to increase traction for rule of law, inclusion and conflict prevention in multilateral organizations' country-level work. By strengthening the ability of UNDP, DPPA and regional organizations to integrate youth-responsive prevention mechanisms into their mandates, FBA has effectively extended Swedish foreign policy influence into key conflict-management forums. This capacity to convene and facilitate across institutional silos has reinforced FBA's reputation not merely as a training provider, but as a trusted partner in action-oriented knowledge production.

Review of the broader training landscape further underscores this distinctiveness. Although several organizations have piloted YPS-related training in recent years, none have combined global reach, sustained delivery, theoretical grounding, and applied methodology. Existing initiatives tend to be one-off, regionally bounded, or narrowly targeted, leaving a persistent gap for practitioners working within institutional and policy settings. Interviewees emphasized that few actors have the mandate, resources, or willingness to sustain a program of this depth over time.<sup>5</sup>

The course has also functioned as a gateway to FBA's wider thought leadership. Participants referenced FBA's role in developing key knowledge products such as the YPS Programming Handbook and thematic guidance notes and reported frequent reliance on these tools in their daily work. This creates a reinforcing dynamic: trained alumni apply FBA methods within their institutions, circulate FBA guidance, and in doing so further extend FBA's influence across UN entities, regional organizations, and government partners.

Finally, respondents highlighted that FBA's added value lies not only in thought leadership but in its collaborative role. Learning forums and joint workshops were described as pivotal for enabling cross-pillar and cross-regional collaboration, particularly in contexts where institutional mandates or political sensitivities constrain engagement. FBA's ability to convene staff from political missions, development actors, civil society networks, and youth movements distinguishes it from more narrowly mandated policy actors.

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Columbia University's AC4 Youth, Peace and Society program (2019–2020), UNITAR's short online course, Sharing Perspectives Foundation's brief 2020 program, UNAOC's regional peace education initiatives, Council of Europe youth programs, and RYCO's regional training in the Western Balkans.

Overall, the YPS course and associated support have become central to FBA's strategic identity. By addressing a clear global training gap, providing authoritative and practical resources, and leveraging unmatched convening power, FBA has consolidated its position as both a thought leader and a collaborative partner within the YPS ecosystem. No comparable alternative currently exists, making the course a critical mechanism through which FBA sustains and expands its leadership in advancing the global YPS agenda.

## **Review Conclusions**

Over the past decade, FBA has emerged as the preeminent global thought leader on Youth, Peace and Security, shaping how multilateral institutions, governments, and civil society actors understand and operationalize the agenda. Through the Realizing the YPS Agenda course and its complementary support modalities, FBA has filled a critical gap at a moment when few actors possessed either the mandate or the technical capacity to translate Security Council Resolution 2250 into practice. This work has not only strengthened the effectiveness of partners but has also advanced Sweden's foreign policy priorities by reinforcing its reputation as a principled, values-driven champion of inclusive peace and democratic governance.

The course and related initiatives, however, were designed in the formative decade of the YPS agenda, when awareness was low, institutional tools were nascent, and demand for foundational learning was high. As the field matures, more practitioners enter roles already equipped with basic YPS literacy, and many institutions—particularly within the UN system—have developed clearer policy frameworks, strategies, and operational entry points. The review has therefore focused on assessing how FBA can remain relevant in this evolving landscape, not by discarding the foundational tools that have defined its leadership, but by ensuring that these tools evolve alongside the needs, capacities, and political realities of its partners.

Key conclusions from the review are as follows:

***FBA is globally recognized as the leading provider of practical, operationally grounded YPS expertise.***

Across multilateral organizations, partners consistently view FBA as the primary source of authoritative guidance and structured learning on YPS.

***Foundational learning tools remain necessary, but they are no longer sufficient for a maturing YPS field.***

As awareness has grown, practitioners increasingly require greater thematic depth, context-responsive tools, and guidance tailored to diverse institutional roles.

***The most meaningful and durable results occur when individual capacity-building is paired with strong institutional mandates and leadership support.***

Examples from the UN system demonstrate that coherent organizational frameworks and senior-level backing significantly amplify the impact of training.

***Training delivered to isolated individuals yields limited sustainability in institutions lacking strategic commitment to YPS.***

Experiences within the OSCE and similar settings show that even highly trained staff struggle to drive change without organizational scaffolding, incentives, or resources.

***Group-based, purpose-driven modalities—such as ToTs and learning forums—are uniquely effective in catalyzing institutional adoption.***

These collective formats generate shared agendas, build networks, and mobilize follow-up actions that extend well beyond individual learning.

***Resource limitations and lack of financing pathways remain major structural barriers to YPS implementation.***

Training strengthens capacity, but without funding to operationalize youth engagement or NAP implementation, impact remains constrained.

***EU institutions show strong individual momentum but lack systemic enabling conditions for YPS uptake.***

Without binding policy direction, YPS advances depend largely on individual champions, making progress vulnerable to rotation and structural fragmentation.

***FBA’s work directly advances Sweden’s foreign policy objectives in prevention, stabilization, democracy, and local ownership.***

The outcomes documented across regions reflect clear contributions to Sweden’s strategic priorities and international influence.

***Continued Swedish leadership is essential in a geopolitical moment marked by democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space.***

FBA remains one of the few actors capable of sustaining momentum on YPS norms, capacity development, and collective action.

***To remain fit for purpose in the next decade, FBA must shift toward more strategic, context-driven, and institution-focused support models.***

This evolution will allow FBA to preserve its foundational strengths while addressing emerging needs and increasing complexity in YPS practice.

## **Recommendations**

### **Overview**

The review underscores that FBA remains the definitive global leader in building the knowledge, skills, and institutional conditions necessary to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. No other actor has stepped into this space with comparable depth, consistency, or credibility, and the Realizing the YPS Agenda course continues to stand alone as the field’s only structured, comprehensive training resource. Its discontinuation would leave a vacuum and erode the critical foothold FBA has established in shaping practice across the UN, EU, and national partners.

At the same time, the evidence shows that sustaining FBA’s leadership requires strategic refinement. While the course should unquestionably continue, we offer a set of suggestions related to participant selection criteria and deployment of resources to amplify FBA’s impact in conflict-affected contexts. While FBA has approached its sponsorship within the online course in a deliberate manner, the review finds that altering selection criteria to drive collective results and learning in specific settings – such as countries and territories prioritized by Swedish or EU foreign policy – could yield more transformative change. This change in approach would trigger the need for slight variations in course content to tailor the content to specific types of conflict and peace drivers and account for diversity within organizations’ policy frameworks. To achieve tangible gains for young people at country level, the course should be viewed not as FBA’s primary or singular tool, but as one element within a broader, deliberate mix of

support modalities that together strengthen individual capacities, organizational systems, and contextual conditions. The recommendations that follow outline how FBA can preserve the value of the course while leveraging a more strategic, multi-modal approach to deepen and expand its impact.

Recommendations are organized in two sections. The first outlines ways to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of FBA's existing tools and results. The second presents evidence-based options for expanding FBA's approach to deepen its impact, reinforce its position as a YPS thought leader, and strengthen its value as a strategic instrument for advancing GoS foreign policy priorities—especially in relation to the EU.

## **To Maximize Existing Tools and Consolidate Gains**

### ***Recommendation 1: Continue the “Realizing the YPS Agenda” course as FBA’s flagship global training asset***

The review provides robust evidence that the course remains the only comprehensive, authoritative, and practice-oriented training on Youth, Peace and Security available to multilateral, national, and civil society actors. It has become foundational to how the UN, EU, and other institutions operationalize Security Council resolutions on YPS, and it serves as a key vehicle through which Sweden demonstrates global leadership on inclusive peace, democratic governance, and conflict prevention. Discontinuing the course would create an immediate vacuum—removing a shared language, toolset, and professional standard that practitioners rely on daily. Continuing the course therefore remains essential, not only to sustain the gains documented in this review, but also to maintain Sweden's strategic influence and to safeguard hard-won progress at a time of shrinking civic space, rising conflict, and declining global investment in human rights-based approaches to peace and security.

### ***Recommendation 2: Limit the course to participants from settings where multiple actors will take the course.***

This recommendation responds to evidence that in organizational or situational contexts in which more than one participant has taken the course, YPS initiatives, policies, strategies and plans have been more transformative and durable than in contexts where a sole course alumnus has shouldered the weight of organizational change. The review team urges the Government of Sweden and FBA to continue its engagement with the online course as an effective tool to advance both the YPS agenda as well as Sweden's foreign policy objectives. At a minimum, the team recommends FBA to identify robust contexts where country-based support can pair with policy change at the organizational level. Such an approach will help amplify effectiveness and efficiency, while enabling FBA to boost relevance to Swedish foreign policy objectives by targeting geographical contexts and organizations that are priorities for the Swedish Government.

### ***Recommendation 3: Facilitate connections between alumni working in the same duty station or organizational setting***

Key informant interviews across a variety of contexts revealed that course alumni in the same duty station were often unaware of each other and therefore missed opportunities to reinforce each other's work and coordinate activities. This gap was evident not only among alumni working in different organizations, who may rarely interact, but even within the same organization in a given duty station. To address this and strengthen collaboration on YPS initiatives, FBA and UNSSC should systematically facilitate introductions among alumni in the same geographic or organizational settings. While FBA cannot control whether such connections result in joint action or shared goals, providing a platform for

alumni to identify one another and build alliances can significantly enhance the effectiveness and durability of YPS-related efforts on the ground.

***Recommendation 4: Provide structured and ongoing follow-on support to the global alumni network.***

Across both survey and KII responses, participants expressed a strong desire for sustained support that would enable them to continue learning from peers, strengthen exchange networks, and stay current with emerging research and tools relevant to the YPS agenda. This can be achieved through annual alumni meetings that bring the network together to share experiences, showcase outcomes, and access updated guidance and analysis. Such gatherings reinforce peer-to-peer learning, which alumni consistently described as highly valuable. Importantly, they would also give FBA an opportunity to collect monitoring data on post-training outcomes and identify new challenges or opportunities. While virtual meetings are feasible, FBA should also consider periodic in-person convenings to deepen interaction and mitigate time-zone constraints. If a global annual meeting is not realistic, FBA could leverage secondees or regional partners to host smaller regional-level gatherings.

***Recommendation 5: Tailor course offerings by integrating existing FBA and external resources on related agendas and emerging challenges.***

Survey and interview data indicate that the YPS agenda is sometimes perceived as yet another thematic priority added to an already crowded landscape that includes WPS, disability inclusion, climate security, and other cross-cutting issues. In organizations without a clear YPS mandate or strategy, this proliferation of priorities can overwhelm staff. FBA can help address this by more intentionally integrating existing guidance and tools into course content and learning forums, demonstrating how YPS connects to — and adds value within — these broader agendas. The WPS agenda, in particular, is well established and supported by robust tools, including within FBA. Strengthening alignment between YPS and WPS would allow practitioners to leverage the visibility and acceptance of WPS while clarifying where the two agendas intersect and where they remain distinct. Beyond WPS, FBA and external partners have developed rich resources on climate security, insider mediation, disability inclusion, hate speech and mis/disinformation, PVE, and intergenerational dialogue — all highly relevant to the YPS agenda. Creating optional modules that explore these linkages would directly address alumni calls for more tailored thematic support and help FBA maintain its position as a thought leader responsive to emerging challenges.

FBA should also consider revising course content to better reflect EU and other institutional mandates, policies, and operating contexts. Developing differentiated “tracks” for senior leaders, policymakers, program teams, and mission or political/security staff would increase relevance across a broader set of roles, a critical step as FBA expands its engagement with the EU in the next phase of support.

## **Recommendations to Support More Transformative and Sustainable Outcomes**

***Recommendation 6: Identify priority contexts and offer mixed-modality, team-based support tied to a concrete YPS objective.***

The review shows that the most durable outcomes emerged from team-based learning models that combined in-person engagement with a clearly defined shared objective, such as developing regional strategies or co-creating training modules, which generated significantly stronger collaboration, ownership and follow-through than isolated individual training. To replicate these results, FBA should work with the GoS, the EU, the OSCE and other partners to identify priority settings and design mixed-

modality support for groups of actors occupying different roles—policy leadership, operational teams, and local partners—recognizing that sustained YPS implementation requires an enabling policy environment, staff familiar with inclusive approaches, and networks of young people who can act as partners. Many contexts will also require targeted funding—through mechanisms such as the PBF, WPHF or a small-grants window—to provide demonstration effects and translate learning into concrete action. A coordinated, country-level approach that brings these actors into a unified planning and learning journey would strengthen institutional commitment and significantly increase the effectiveness and sustainability of YPS outcomes.

***Recommendation 7: Develop a comprehensive yet user-friendly monitoring tool to capture individual, organizational, and contextual results.***

Given the GoS's expectation to understand what its long-term investment in the YPS agenda has achieved, FBA should establish a practical monitoring system that captures post-training changes at individual, organizational, and contextual levels. This is not only about accountability to government, but about learning what works, where to expand effective approaches, and where to scale back efforts that are not producing sustained results. A monitoring tool could, for example, have flagged the limited impact of investing in a single staff member within an organization lacking a YPS mandate and prompted a shift toward more appropriate forms of support. Beyond internal monitoring, FBA could leverage its role as a YPS thought leader to promote a global monitoring framework—akin to the AU's Continental Results Framework for WPS—to build shared understanding of effective practice, strengthen advocacy, and contribute to the emerging evidence base, even recognizing the challenge posed by the absence of universally agreed YPS standards.

***Recommendation 8: Partner with the EU to launch a comprehensive organizational capacity assessment to determine whether and how FBA investments can most effectively support the EU to advance the YPS agenda.***

As Swedish Government policy increasingly prioritizes partnership with EU institutions, FBA should consider how to more strategically target its engagement so the EU can advance the YPS agenda in a systematic and sustainable way. While interest is growing within isolated pockets of the EU—as reflected in the rising number of EU staff taking the Realizing the YPS Agenda course—the review shows that individual capacity building without organizational and political commitments, policy direction, and practical tools will have only limited impact. As a first step, FBA could support the EU in conducting a comprehensive organizational capacity assessment – examining policy instruments, operational guidance, staffing, tools, and funding – to ensure that future investments take root and contribute to transformative change. This mirrors the strong evidentiary foundation that underpinned FBA's successful support to the UN, where an initial capacity assessment helped diagnose key gaps impeding YPS implementation. A similar assessment for the EU would help identify a clear, structured approach to capacity building and, by generating evidence of gaps and demonstration effects, could also help secure senior leadership buy-in.