YOUTH

AGENDA

YOUTH MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION GUIDELINE

2022

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GUIDELINE 2022

Contents

About Door Beyond War (DBW)

Door Beyond War (DBW) organization is a civil society organization registered in Turkey since mid-2018, working with the Syrian community structures to reach its vision of a decent society capable of overcoming challenges through creative utilization of available resources.

To this end, DBW is committed to working within the scope of community development programs and economic empowerment, building the community strength to effectively organize and assemble its resources through capacity-building, self-sufficiency, and microfinance projects.

DBW is motivated by its belief in community work and the importance of building strong relationships between the Syrian people parts by the means of dialogue and advocacy in promoting community cohesion.

DBW is experienced in projects that aim at increasing community cohesion, activating dialogue, and distributing roles among the various segments of the Syrian society. Through these projects, DBW has also focused on building the capacity of CBOs and grassroots, enhancing their self-sufficiency opportunities, and enriching their ability to launch initiatives using their local resources.

About Youth of Change Network (YCN)

Youth of Change Network (YCN) is a voluntary community-based organization established in Northern Syria in 2015. YCN works to enhance the role of community initiatives and volunteer work and to achieve its vision of an empowered and effective society capable of making change and contributing to decision-making.

Therefore, YCN has been working through its community committees–spread in Idlib, Western and Northern countryside of Aleppo, and parts of Hama countryside– to launch community initiatives that serve and empower the Syrian society to face the harsh conditions created by bombardment and displacement.

YCN consists of 27 community development committees in addition to 7 technical teams; training team, research team, campaigns and advocacy team, women team, self-sufficiency projects team, forcibly displaced team, and media team.

The Network has launched many campaigns and initiatives and organized several capacity-building programs in the fields of education, community cohesion, psychological support, safety and security, and public interest services.

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▶ Introduction

The World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, 2016) stressed the need to protect the rights of young people (between 10–24 years old) and involve them in humanitarian response efforts. Upon this summit, The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (CYPHA) was launched to further support efforts led by and for young people – including the Global Refugee Youth Consultations in 2015–2016, the 2015 Doha Youth Declaration on Reshaping the Humanitarian Agenda, and the 2015 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security.

Adolescence and post-conflict periods share many characteristics; both are transitional phases marked by conflicts, uncertainties, aspirations, and anxiety. Unlike children, who are covered in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), youth have not been meaningfully involved in the international peace and development efforts as most conflict-related data simply ignore them, making it extremely difficult to analyse youth-related issues and act accordingly. On the contrary, youth have come under public focus being related to hostilities, warfare, irresponsibility and other harmful behaviours. Consequently, many international organizations–including the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children `(WCRWC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), The World Bank (WB), and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)– have recently realized the importance of putting youth on the international agenda and consider them a significant target group while working towards peacebuilding .

This Youth Agenda Report in Syria intends to provide organizations that work with or are led by youth with necessary information and analysis required to improve youth response, assess programs, and tailor interventions to achieve more meaningful youth participation. It also provides insights into the role of youth in peacebuilding and community development as well as empowering NGOs programs to foster the role of youth in the Syrian community.

Research Methodology

This research has adopted a bottom-up participatory approach by developing research questions jointly with Youth for Change Network research team. The questionnaire was developed based on the output of FGDs about UNSCR2250. These FGDs took place in 14 different geographic locations in the Northwest of Syria and were attended by representatives of youth teams and teams led by youth themselves.

Moreover, the participatory approach was implemented in the data collection phase in 18 FGDs on youth conception, motivations, meaningful participation and empowerment, besides more than 55 interviews with youth teams' leaders and 14 NGOs working with or for youth in the Northwest of Syria. This study used the Participatory Action Research-PAR approach by building on case studies about organizations and youth teams' practices and their success stories on related concepts.

The research focused on the main problem that faces active youth in the process of peacebuilding, namely violence, deprivation, marginalization and despair on one side and the lack of attention given to their efforts that aim at peacebuilding and empowerment on the other side.

This guideline aims at exploring youth conceptions and meaningful participation and also aims at shedding light at youth projects and initiatives. It presents several guiding steps to promote youth empowerment programs in general and promote their roles in community work and peacebuilding process in particular.

? Main questions and aspects of the guideline:

A What are the motivations that affect youth involvement in community work and peacebuilding (what are the values, knowledge, role models, ….) and what are youth essential rights?

B What are youth roles in general and their roles in maintaining peace in particular? What are the challenges that hinder achieving these goals? What are the sectors that youth have succeeded in? what empowered them to achieve this end? What are the required empowering tools to help shed more light on youth initiatives?

C What is the role of civil society organizations in empowering youth roles? What are the existent empowering programs, institutions and policies for the future?

The study consists of 3 chapters; first chapter discusses youth definition, motivations, rights, challenges and concerns by conducting 10 focus- group discussions FGDs with 72 members of Community-Based Organizations CBOs and voluntary teams VTs, and 55 key informant interviews KIIs. The second chapter focuses on meaningful participation by conducting 4 FGDs with CBOs and vocational training teams, the aforementioned 55 KIIs, and 14 KIIs with Local NGOs. The last chapter discusses youth empowerment and concerned institutions, policies, legislations, and programs by conducting 4 FGDs with CBOs and VTs, the same KIIs, and 14 KIIs with Local NGOs.

The study is a practical application of the partnership pillar within UNSCR2250, as leaders of volunteer teams and leaders of organizations working with youth contributed to the success of this guideline by presenting

case studies and success stories that expressed the importance of youth participation in community, humanitarian and development work.

The participatory approach was used to develop recommendations by holding two meetings with volunteer teams and organizations in Syria and Turkey to present the results of the research and discuss the recommendations in a participatory manner.

The participatory action research helped the organizations and teams consider their issues collectively and enabled organizations and youth to generate new ideas and think more practically to develop their policies and practices to involve youth. And also helped them to offer recommendations and practical solutions to promote partnerships in order to design high involvement programs of youth in humanitarian and development work.

Research limitations

The research focused on youth roles in volunteer teams and organizations role; however, didn't cover the government role thoroughly as the government role is very poor and several parties are overtaking this role in Syria.

The research focused on humanitarian and development organizations working with or led by youth and seeking to maximize youth participation in their mandate. However, the research didn't target organizations that focus mainly on humanitarian work in their mandates.

Partnership and participation pillar were the core of the research, the pillars of protection, prevention, disarmament and reintegration were left out due to the difficulty of influencing these pillars within such security situation in Syria.

Research Problem

Where young people have experienced armed power, political promises in recruitment, and positive self-concepts and identity in armed conflict, the transition into 'peace' becomes very difficult. Moreover, inter-generational conflict is likely to emerge after war and other periods of social and political turmoil.

Even youth who have been actively involved in non-violent mass movements, rather than in war-fighting or political violence, are marginalized during political transitions, as political power flows to adult leadership, elders, or external power-broking elites. Some of these dynamics were vividly seen during the 'Arab Spring.' But the pattern of youth activists being out-maneuvered by older and more experienced political actors is widespread and it cuts across regions and regime-types.

Youth are subordinate to adult elites who make political decisions, sign peace accords, write history, and design aid programs. And despite being the catalysts and fighters of wars and revolutions, despite having their futures drastically altered by conflict, youth get left out of many aspects of peacebuilding. This is more than an ironic contradiction. It is a set of processes around which further reflection, dialogue and research is needed.

Although every context has important differences, some aspects of the setting are all too familiar: in post-war periods, traditional structures and/or key institutions (such as education, health or leisure) that might protect young people, mitigate youth violence, and productively channel youth energies, are often non-existent or fragile.

Parental, elder and external authority may be disputed. Often, pre-war grievances of youth can be linked to repressive or unfair systems of local governance and resource distribution, which remain unchanged post-war or are actively reproduced through donor aid efforts. Likewise, re-opening schools, while essential, may not address the needs of older youth, and teachers may be distrusted and/or they may be distrustful of youth. The ambition, criticism and creativity of youth are often not rewarded or fostered in these contexts.

New conflicts threaten from outside, as regional wars and rumors of war persist. Various forms of state-sponsored and factional violence continue to target youth (both directly and indirectly), gangs, community defense organizations and militias that may develop with marginal youth at their centers. War-related trauma is widespread and the practical difficulties of economic survival compound it, creating new grievances.

Many of the same problems experienced pre and during war still exist but they can take on new meanings. A peace process, democratic transition, or a reconstruction period are all powerful symbols, as well as a lived experience with high expectations. As both a symbol and an experience shape attitudes and values and young people's interpretations of its relative costs from an important test of its legitimacy and sustainability.

Many studies have shown how youth are creative and resilient, and that most young people are not violent, yet peace processes continue to fail to create a political space welcoming to youth. In addition to being an injustice, this is not a helpful message, nor an accurate portrayal of young people's actual activities or inclinations. It suggests, unintentionally, that youth have no proper role in non-violent conflict - in the politics of peace.

Further research aimed at knowing more about the barriers to youth inclusion in the politics of 'post-conflict' peacebuilding, including how leaders perceive youth and the risks involved in their inclusion, would be welcome. The challenge of integrating young people's needs and interests with those of peacebuilding is multifaceted, and full of grey areas. For example, there may be no bright line between those who are combatants, nonviolent protestors, human rights activists, and/or who shift into gangs and criminal organizations, after being active in political struggles, as they seek to find a place for themselves in their new societies. People can have all of these roles at different times - an important thing to remember when considering present 'terrorists' or 'Jihadis'.

Unfortunately, this lack of distinction can also help local leaders justify repressive policies towards youth whose politics threaten their interests. Governments defining non-violent protesters as 'thugs' or 'terrorists' illustrate how those labels are often convenient and politicized. Yet, none of this should be surprising.

This dynamic of youth-to-adult subordination simply mirrors other arenas in which adults are reluctant to share power with youth or to incorporate young's people knowledge into their projects (unless its suits their interests and mirrors their own views).

Within academic, research and policy development circles, we also need to be alert to how we keep this division alive as well. For instance, the language of youth 'crisis' or 'harnessing' youth as 'assets' can be a double-edged sword.

These labels command attention and rightly identify youth capabilities. They get youth on the policy agenda. But they also, in a way, reproduce the logic of the military recruiters, in that they engage in a cost-benefit analysis that employs youth as means to an end.

Should this kind of instrumentalization of youth matter when the laudable end is 'peace'? Is positioning youth as the solution, rather than the problem, not a clever counter strategy? May it persuade elites to, in their own self-interest, take youth on board?

Research Sample

The total number of participants is 132 in 18 FGDs and 58 in KIIs; 10 FGDs on youth definition, 4 on meaningful participation and 4 on youth empowerment.

The research sample includes both male and female participants. Males constitute 62% of the participants in the FGDs and 66% of the KIIs, while females form 38% in the FGDs and 34% in the KIIs.

The sample consists of different age groups, the majority of them are below 30 years old; 61% below 24 in the FGDs, 17% between 25 and 29, and 23% over 30 years old. In the KIIs, 31% are below 24 years old, 33% between 25 and 29, 29% are between 30 and 35 years old and 9% over 35. In addition to CBOs and individual participants in the FGDs and KIIs, representatives from 14 local NGOs participated in the KIIs to respond to meaningful participation and empowerment tools.
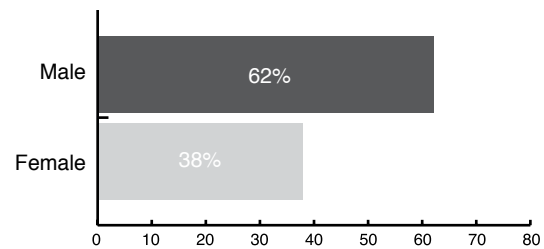
Figure 3: Sample by Gender - FGDs
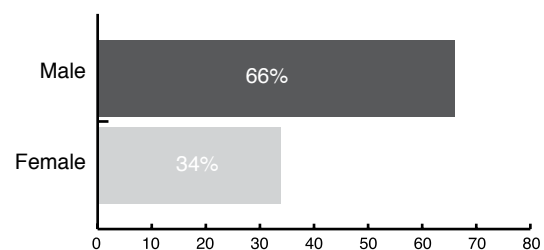
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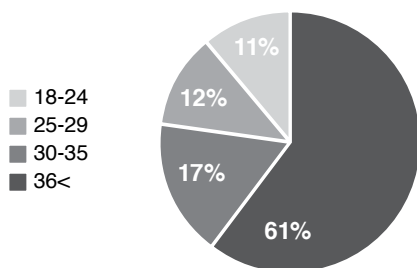
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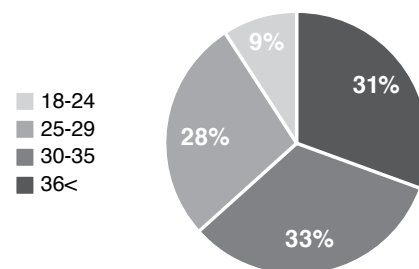
Figure 2: Sample By Age - KIIs

Geographic Target

The study covered young males and females, Voluntary Teams and Community-Based Organizations in different locations. The FGDs were conducted in key cities in Northwest Syria such as Afrin, Al-Atarib, Atimah, A›zaz, Idlib, Ma›arrat Misrin and Salqin.

Location	#FDGs	#participants
Afrin	4	20
Al-Atarib	1	6
Atimah	2	13
A›zaz	4	32
Idlib	4	21
Salqin	3	26
Gaziantep	2	14
Grand Total	18	132

Table 1: Geographic Locations for FGDs.

	Afrin	Al-Atarib	Aqrabat	Arihah	Atimah	A'zaz	Gaziantep	Idlib	Kafr Takharim	Ma'arrat Misrin	Salqin	Sarmada
Kii	3	4	3	2	4	10	1	13	1	6	4	2
FGD	20	6			13	32	14	21			26	

Figure 5: Sample by tools in each location

Yet, in some locations, we faced difficulties to include females in the FGDs for security reasons. However, the research team handled this challenge by either organizing FGDs for female participants only or through KIIs.

	Afrin	Al-Atarib	Aqrabat	Arihah	Atimah	A'zaz	Gaziantep	Idlib	Kafr Takharim	Ma'arrat Misrin	Salqin	Sarmada
◼ Male	20	9	2	2	10	18	11	21	1	5	15	2
◼ Female	3	1	1		7	24	4	13		1	15	

Figure 6: Sample by Gender in each location

Chapter 1
Youth Definition

Youth Definition:

Youth are frequently defined by "who they are not" rather than "who they are" .This "non-definition" represents the pervasive feeling of exclusion experienced by youth.

Exclusion is a major identity that dominates youth identity disparities. Although that youth is the pathway of transitions from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood, yet there is no general agreement on an age-based definition of youth even among different UN agencies. Regionally and nationally, several age definitions are employed. Because "youth is a social artefact, rather than a straightforward biological, demographic, or chronological term".

Realization of adult status is usually attached with a set of different landmarks; such as obtaining a specified educational level, performing certain religious ceremonies, starting a family, becoming self-sufficient, owning property, or the loss of a parent. i.e the experience that individual undergoes is what makes them adults rather than fixed formal markers of chronological age.

During the Arab Spring, for instance, activists refused to confine their young identity to certain age ranges. Instead, they identify themselves as a generation who share the same consciousness and story of transformation named as youth social movement.

Normative notions of youth life-cycle can be affected by many factors such as violence and social turmoil which place more burden on young people by forcing them to take adults' responsibilities early. Both young men and women face similar challenges in their journey to maturity, though differently. The changing roles and societal duties that mark the transition from youth to adulthood can be strikingly different (SGMs).

Delaying in achieving certain societal duties, due to various reasons results in a state

known as imprisoned youth or waithood . For young people, the problems of eternal youthhood are worsened by the prevalent notion used by elders and policymakers depicting youth as "the future," instead of emphasizing their major role in the present. As one young woman puts it "There's this notion that we are the future ... we are the leaders now, we should be doing things now. We are the present".

> When youth have passion and determination, they can make the impossible happen. Youth spirit and determination are key factors in successful projects and programs implementation.
>
> Ghofran, 23 year old female participant from Idlib.

Figure 7: Youth Concept form the point of view of youth themselves

Young people are frequently perceived as unchangeable homogeneous group when defined by age range only. However, young people, as a representation of a larger society, are diverse and occasionally divided varying in terms of gender, colour, religion, ethnicity, rank, culture, and political connections, etc.

Educating youth about their needs, priorities and relationship with government, politics, and civil society is highly significant. Targeted young population constitutes of various subgroups, yet there is still the possibility of engaging youth as a group. In reality, several concerns– such as education and self-development, social cohesion and diversity, and economic stability, quality healthcare– are of special significance to all young people. Youth shows a desire to engage in awareness publicly more effectively.

In this study, the majority of young males and females, aged between18 and 35, when asked about youth perception, linked youth to certain characteristics such as productivity, energy, activeness, contribution to development, change, and community prosperity, instead of focusing on age only.

Figure 8: Youth Concept form the point of view of NGOs

The participants emphasize stability and capability for youth in order to be productive.

Likewise, the CBOs and voluntary teams participating in FGDs shared this view in defining youth concept. They attributed productivity and achievement as the keywords to the youth concept. For them, youth are the foundation for a positive future, as agents of change and as the ambitious, creative and capable members of the society. Even though youth definition is not restricted to a specific age group, participants consider young people from 18 to 35 years old, while another part refers to 13 to 24 or 25 years old.

"Youth, in the current situation, are seeking to realize themselves, while living an identity crisis."

Abdul Razzaq Abdul Razzaq, 39 years old - Male

"Without youth, nations and societies, no matter how powerful, are doomed to collapse. on the contrary, societies with empowered youth are able to overcome all their crises and move towards a bright future."

The wishful image of youth

Youth, sometimes are viewed as the generation that is involved in disputes and fights, on the other hand, they are portrayed as the cornerstone of the future, but are young people troublemakers or peacebuilders?

This has to be tackled urgently so that we can benefit from youth's contributions to peacebuilding and realize what 1.8 billion young people are capable of. In 2016, approximately 408 million young people worldwide (aged 15 to 29) lived in areas where armed conflict or organized violence was present. This indicates that at least one of every four young people is impacted by violence or armed conflict.

Youth living in those conflict-affected areas struggle to change their reality. Majority of interviewed Syrian youth for this study, who are part of CBOs or VTs, indicate that young people are facing many problems and have concerns towards the unknown future.

A male respondent said " young men always think about their ambitions, but the fear from the unknown future is a huge obstacle. I want to pursue my university degree in the Liberated Areas. Then, I'm hit by the reality of whether local university degrees are really recognized.
 This is one of the challenges."
Another young male participant expressed that "Young men are often exposed to psychological and social pressures. They are under pressure to secure their future and livelihood".

 'The current situation of young people is like a tree whose leaves are falling due to instability and displacement. All that young people discuss is "PUBG" and other video games. On the other side, by the parents' care, organizations programs and youth teams' contribution to empower young people and universities that seek to obtain recognition, we will have a promising future', as one of the female participants said. She added describing the way she envisions future "a vase of roses and an oasis".
The participants in the KIIs explained more about the reality of young males and females

> The programs offered to young people do not match reality.
>
> Ismail, A 33-year-old male from Idlib

in Syria. According to them, young people find it difficult to take the initiative yet they are ready to participate when needed. Abdul Khaleq Hamada, an 18-year-old young man, told us: "I was an ordinary person who didn't think about society, development or anything at all. Over the past two years, I've been involved in some training on teamwork skills, volunteering and critical thinking training that have completely changed me. I started considering doing good deeds for the society. Unfortunately, most young people are busy following silly youtubers and celebrities. However, when we look at the work done by some teachers and volunteers, I say there is still hope in the near future."

Figure 9: The current image of youth from the point of view of youth themselves

Young people, especially university students, are unable to commit to university due to the pressure of life and the need to support themselves and their families. "It is the responsibility of governments and organizations to help young people. When students graduate from university, they do not get a job because they are 'young' and have no experience. Young people are the leaders of society but they do not find opportunities even in the students' offices or in organizations that work with youth.

"The last two years have witnessed youth's awakening. There are now attempts to develop and plans for the future."

Rafah Daaboul - female - 29 years old

Youth Offices have been set up, where are they now? They are few and barely do anything because the government doesn't trust youth abilities. For instance, according to governmental directives, 22-year-old university top achievers must be appointed as lecturers at university, but this does not happen because they are still young", AbdulQadir Qara Mohammed, a 24-year-old male, said. He added:' There are many neglected people, begging in the street and collecting garbage, and a large number of young people with disabilities who are unemployed due to nepotism and favouritism. As long as these manifestations continue without action and change in the intellectual level, the future will never change.
The situation is dire and organizations programs provided for young people are irrelevant to youth needs and priorities. Protection and psychological support

programs, for example, are too simple with inadequate activities that lack appropriate counselling or coaching. There are many refugees' success stories in host communities such as Turkey, Jordan and European countries. However, in Syria, there is neither a supporting environment nor required services. Many of the interviewed youth highlighted the impact of war on young people and the need to develop approaches that address this issue in the liberated areas.

In the present time, while some young people are empowered and take their roles, the majority of youth are not. Their energies and potentials are unexploited yet, i.e. youth are in dire need for advocacy to embrace their needs and ideas, raise their awareness and build their capacities and experiences. Ongoing circumstances deter young people from reaching their potentials. However, proper programs that meet the youth needs and a more inclusive approach for youth in decision making process are required by stakeholders to utilize youth potentials within the community.

A glimpse of a bright future can be seen in voluntary teams, young activists and students of local and virtual universities that are in a gradual increase in the last 2 years, unlike the early days of the revolution. Abdul Razzaq comments: "young people became more aware of their concerns than they were at the beginning of the conflict although they had more tools of change at that time, particularly, after youth lost hope in the international community to support their revolution. Youth acquire the knowledge, motives and desire for change but lack the tools to achieve it. Some individual cases and large teams gained tools and networking skills required to form critical non-competing alliances ".

Youth can't go back in time to 2011, they have grown up quickly due to the devastating psychological pressures in the last 10 years; However, still in need for more knowledge to be included in the decision-making process. Currently, community-related decisions exclude youth and their interests in the decision making. Youth need to nurture their capacities to be actively involved in the original framework they belong to.

The Outlook for Youth

The future needs well-educated, self-aware and empowered youth, a patriotic generation devoted to their country and determined to rebuild Syria economically and politically. Youth should have the upper hand in building a new Syria because they are aware of the real needs and priorities of their generation.

Being hunted by surrounding death or displacement, youth are suffering a drop in morale and unable to set goals and work towards realizing them. In other words, developing personal skills and building capacities is not accessible for displaced youth who live in such chaotic situations.

To realize this outlook, youth need to be financially empowered, with developed personal skills and freedom of movement and travel. They should be involved in all aspects of public life including government institutions that have a key role in projects planning, implementation, follow-up and interventions. To achieve this, government institutions, known as local authority institutions, NGOs and voluntary teams have the responsibility to put youth on the top of their agendas and establish offices for youth.

Involvement in political life, practicing the right of forming civic groups and expanding their space are all essentials. A youth space to express needs supported by real CBOs is a demand. A civic space of freedom of expression safe from authority harassment can expand youth participation in and contribution to communities. Today, youth are being harassed and even detained for social media posts, though there are no laws defining cybercrimes. The liberated areas have witnessed several waves of arrest against activists for expressing their opinions. Young people must be granted the right to peaceful demonstration and to be protected, not to be harassed or arrested, by authorities.

Figure 10: Youth wishful image

Now, Youth have become more aware of the political and economic contexts and managed to have representatives in the government. They can start forming networks and coalitions and, if supported sufficiently, having an impact on the local, regional and international levels. They can reject irrelevant projects that don't meet their needs and interests. A notable rise of postgraduate and research students' numbers is also promising. Their produced research and studies need to be considered by donors and decision-makers when designing projects and planning responses. To this end, studies carried out by young people must gain advocacy to have the resulting recommendations implemented.

Young people are far from education, technical development and culture due to the lack of resources.

Ahmed - male - 23 years old

Role Models, Values and Motivation:

Adults can have unlimited impacts on teenager's life, being a role model is a proof. Though the importance of role model is frequently mentioned by policy makers and academics, there is no agreement on a clear definition of this concept. Furthermore, role models and mentors are used interchangeably sometimes regardless of being two different concepts. A role model is someone who is imitated by others and who may or may not have interaction with others who think of him or her as a role model. While a mentor is a person who advises and coaches his or her mentees by interacting directly with them. Mentors are frequently role models, while role models are not always mentors . Through role modelling, youths can find a positive image or identity that motivates them. Mentoring takes it a step further by teaching the skills required to attain that image.

Figure 11: Youth Role Models

According to studies, positive role models have proved to reduce the liability of a young person engaging in dangerous behaviours and become more likely to adopt a good lifestyle involving diet and exercise and have greater grades and self-confidence. A positive role model can also safeguard adolescents against harmful attitudes and behaviours, especially if the role model is a family member of the same gender. Similarly,

research findings also show that young people whose role models participate in bad or dangerous behaviours (e.g., drugs, alcohol, adultery, violence) are more likely to imitate them and engage in such risky behaviours themselves .

Youth also tend to choose role models similar to themselves from the same gender, colour, and ethnicity. Furthermore, studies suggest that having a good role model of the same group helps youth from traditionally disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups recognize that they have the capacity to develop into a healthy, productive, and positive adult too. The most influencing form of role model for adolescents is an adult who has comparable demographics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) and whom they know personally. It's worth mentioning that community-based programs and media sources can help to promote prosocial behaviours in the communities .

Do young people, on the other hand, see members of their groups as role models? Few studies have asked children and young people to name their role models. They discovered that participants in most of the schools were hesitant to use the phrase role model. In most situations, the questions asked determine who young people nominate.

In a pre-television research in 1956, Australian adolescents aged 10–15 years were asked "who they would most like to be like," and they picked athletic heroes, pop stars, actors, and TV personalities, indicating a change away from the dominance of parents and parent surrogates. Another research showed comparable results from a similar age group to the same question, but when young people were asked to choose "the most important person in the world" 42 percent named a family member.
When asked who their heroes are, or who they would seek for aid or support, young people frequently choose teachers, family members, classmates, and close friends. Young people are likely to regard a variety of persons as possible role models, although various groups may be seen as role models in different ways.
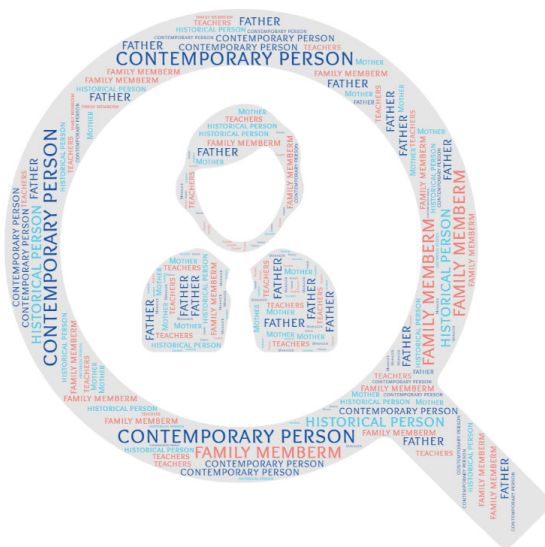
Social cognitive theory assumes that individuals learn behaviour more easily by seeing others than by learning through the consequences of their own action. As a result of observing adults in their environment, youth may acquire many of their attitudes and habits. Many researches proved that having a role model is connected to higher grades, higher self-esteem and stronger ethnic identification. Furthermore, it is also associated with reduced aggressive behaviours, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. In case of having direct contact with the role model, the impacts are even larger.

Figure 12: the values of good role modles

In this study, there was a close distribution in terms of role models between contemporary personalities, family members, and historical figures. Among the contemporary personalities were teachers, university professors and trainers, in addition to famous personalities in areas of change, development and media, as well as business managers. As for the family level, the father was the most frequent role model in general followed by the mother. As for the historical figures, there was a great diversity of personalities, mostly religious and political figures, and mainly Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

This study also has shown a similar link between youth and role models, who are mostly a family member or an active close person such as a teacher or a coach.

Many participants referred to a set of values that linked them to the role models they had chosen, with credibility represented by honesty, integrity, transparency, and sense of justice and democracy in the first place. Others referred to a set of characteristics such as ambition, determination, commitment, and dedication to change in society.

This was also accompanied by a set of moral values such as modesty, independence, respect and openness to other people's opinions, rejection of extremism and demonstrating a strong commitment to religious teachings and morals and working to promote them among others.

Participants identified a set of criteria that role models should meet: at the top was community work skills, community responsibility and active citizenship that enable role models to influence others by presenting creative ideas, giving motivation and developing others' skills.

Participants also stressed the importance of leadership and personal skills of role models. A role model, according to participants, "is someone with clear goals and effective communication skills." Participants also focused on social intelligence and sound thinking with an evidence-based approach that integrates both theory and practicality as important qualities that should be available in role models. The last set of criteria included selflessness, closeness and openness to people, particularly young people, and the ability to engage young people in productive activities that can contribute to society's well-being.

Role models have been incorporated through programs in educational, community, and workplace contexts based on the notion that they, role models, can enhance the positive impact expected from role models. Moreover, these programs are thought to encourage young people to make better life choices, advance their educational outcomes, and help them develop skills, values, and other characteristics that promote citizenship and lead to a full and productive adulthood for the benefit of the community and economy.

Figure 13: the characteristics of good role models

> A nation or community without youth, no matter how powerful it might be, is threatened to collapse. And any community full of youth, with good level of care, can overcome all crisis and create a new future.
>
> Participant no.41

Challenges and Concerns of Youth:

Justice is generally perceived as the provision of fair and equal opportunity and is frequently divided into distributive and corrective justice. Distributive justice is the equal distribution of goods and services, while corrective justice aims at restoring a situation of rightful distribution that was interrupted due to breach in the rights of a person or group. In both perspectives, justice is mainly concerned with finding strategies to make society more equal and recompense for past wrongs such as wars. In the context of this chapter, moving from war to post-war has already created a hope for people that they may find a way out of uncertainty and marginalization toward social justice . However, limitations to move freely and participate in post-war recovery processes create distributive injustice. Corrective justice happens as a legitimate claim to improve the ability to (re) integrate into society. In such a situation, the possibilities and restrictions related to movement are crucial for understanding the way young people experience the post-war situation and the prospects for social justice. Therefore, any restriction to establish justices is a main challenge for youth in post war situations where maximum levels of participation is needed.

On the contrary, youth initiatives working on the ground are threatened with many financial, social and legal challenges. The lack of supporting entities resulted in the suspension of a number of planned activities. In addition to the material challenges, the volunteer team faces the social challenge represented by the lack of acceptance or rejection of certain awareness raising initiatives. Because awareness issues are not considered as a priority at the community now.

Figure 14: the challenges and concers of youth

These challenges are doubled when the volunteer is a female. Customs and traditions stigmatize working girls and associate them with negative views. These challenges were also accompanied by security concerns during the implementation of the activities represented mainly by the fear of missile and airstrikes, as well as the fear of the unknowing future that awaits them.

The current movements of young people are shaped by their past movements. The costs of war are imprinted on their bodies and minds. During the war, people lived in fear and young people were vulnerable in multiple ways. They recall feelings of fear whether they served as frontline fighters or hid from public places to avoid forced recruitment or surveillance by government security forces. Young people experienced forced displacement, loss of family members, lack of education and livelihood opportunities, and movement restrictions.

Figure 15: the enablers to overcome challenges

Issuing official papers and transactions is another challenge. Those papers are usually submitted by the central authority. Without these official papers, people are unable to move between several areas of control. This fear is accompanied by another fear of losing access to official documents which affects life on all levels.
Despite reaching a stage of cessation of hostilities, the vague future of a state of "no war" and "no peace" creates a feeling of chronic anxiety.

The lack of opportunities and the lack of justice in the provision of services such as education and access to job opportunities are also major challenges for young people.

Increased opportunities and access to education and employment created hope, however still entrenched with disappointment and fear by the existence of checkpoints and cases of armament based on different social divisions, to add to the list of challenges. A young male participant complained " When we were passing through one of the checkpoints, the road was closed because of an accident, which forced many cars to stop for the road to re-open, but it was clear that some cars were crossing easily, and the checkpoint personnel were helping these vehicles to cross because they were members some of the ruling factions. This scene prompted two young people to question themselves, do you think we will be able one day to experience true citizenship in Syria?"

The continuation of relations based on ties of arms and politics in society, even after the fighting has stopped, does not only affect the implementation of democracy, but affects the general life of the people on a daily basis. Social turmoil becomes a regular and persistent feature of daily reality and not an exceptional case that forces young people to be constantly wary and afraid to speak in public. These different examples of unjust practices deter youth from participating inbuilding a post-war country.

But what enables youth to overcome those challenges and concerns? Participants mentioned a few factors such as insisting on work as the most effective factor that makes them continue in the face of those challenges. Support of the family and community members is another factor that support youth. Personal traits such as leadership, patience, experience help youth keep going; moreover, effective networking and relations are supportive to youth to overcome the challenges. They also referred to the importance of developing new tools to work with the community. Lastly, another factor was added; staying away from negativity and cooperating with the team, and seeking professional help when needed.

Fundamental Rights for Youth:

Certain groups of people- such as children, women and people with disabilities- face barriers in accessing their rights, yet the international community created some instruments to support them. Similarly, young people moving between two stages of life- childhood and adulthood- can become extremely vulnerable to different forms of discrimination that can affect their potentials in accessing to rights such as education, protection, and full access to civil and political rights. Therefore, youth need specific protection to foster their complete access to rights, mainly the right of participation and the right of freedom of expression, being fundamental rights.

Stakeholders fail to weigh the importance of creating new instruments to support youth rights; however, the use of existing mechanisms can highlight gaps in protecting and guaranteeing youth rights and can be used to understand the attained added value of creating youth rights instruments. Currently, there is no specific convention on youth rights to address challenges that youth face, just as the UN convention of the rights of the child UNCRC does for children, thus, the existing human rights instrument can be used for youth.

Two existing examples of regional instruments focus on the rights of youth; the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the Iberoamerican Convention on Rights of Youth (ICRY). Both address youth rights under the umbrella of international human rights framework. The AYC introduces new rights, boosting effective youth participation and promoting the development and implementation of policies and programmes for young people. Furthermore, it calls for youth participation in national parliaments . Presenting youth as 'assets' or 'resources' is an acknowledgment of young people's right to participation. However, they should be framed as 'right holders' instead of being reframed as 'resources '. Moreover, the involvement of youth prevents a youth 'threat' and force political elites to handle them .

The UNCRC is the first human rights treaty to explicitly assert children's civil rights. Every child has the right to information, to express his or her views, to be involved in decisions affecting him or her, to form or join associations, and to be part of peaceful assembly. Children's participation is identified as a right to be fulfilled in its own right and as a means to achieve other rights. In contexts affected by violent conflict, human rights abuses are frequently both a cause and a symptom of conflicts. Therefore,

addressing human rights and child rights violations is a corner stone to achieve peace. Support for citizenship participation, good governance with space for children and youth participation are essentials to address rights violations.

when children are excluded from participation on various programming or when they face abuse at the hand of those who are supposed to help them, as a result, they avoid participation in other outreach or social workers. Which can create further implications on children's lives socially. Researchers showed that violence occurs at governmental institutions as they occur in the streets.

The participants in the study pointed out the importance of the right to expression as a basic right that guarantees their access to the rest of the rights. The ability of young people to actively participate, express and defend their opinions is a necessary Prerequisite for obtaining other important rights such as the right to education, the right to work and the right to live in dignity. The right to participate includes a set of rights, such as the right to demonstrate, the right to gathering, the right to mobility, the right to political representation, and the right to freedom. The participants also expressed the importance of providing the right to work and education as fundamental rights as young people need to build a stable future. They also emphasized the right to volunteer and the right to have youth institutions. There was also a set of rights that might fall under the category of basic rights, such as the right to marriage, have property, protection, security, and the right to life.

Figure 16: Youth Fundamental rights

"

My university education got frozen for 2 years as I was unable to afford the fees. I also support my family, so how could I afford 300$ for university enrolment?

Asma, a 23 years-old female

Youth need spaces for active participation in public and political life to become influencers.

Abdullah Sabbagh, 27 years-old male.

Currently all rights are lost, not only youth rights.

Ahmad Telfah, 30 years-old male.

Uneducated people can never know their rights, absence of job opportunities pushes youth towards despair and negativity.

Hussam Qutaini , 24 years-old male

"

Waad Alkhateeb

We make our struggle feasible and our lives meaningful

When the Syrian youth started the Syrian revolution, they dreamt of making their voices heard in a way that could make change. May be the repressive de facto authority won't hear such voices, but the youth who went out to the streets will definitely hear them and friends, families and neighbors could hear them too.

 Since the first days we were searching for the "meaning", were looking for a path or a hope in our struggle for change. We aspired to make a difference and affect policy makers. In other situations, our aspirations were much simpler, for example reaching out for a new person to join us or a new house. The Syrian youth succeeded in various situations by bringing the Syrian revolution to the table of many conferences.

They highlighted the regimes atrocities including arresting peaceful activists and committing war crimes against civilians. Syrians utilized all means such as films, photos, stories of youth, teacher doctors and children.

We cling to hope in each story, though personally I have lost hope in many situations. Sometimes I wonder 'can such things really leave an impact? But usually I tell myself that each new step is a chance to make a difference and I have to do it. It is not a personal issue; it is a public responsibility which forces us to try even if we can't reach the desired aim. Trying to deliver my voice, even if I fail, is much better than doing nothing and then feel guilty.

In the first day when I carried my camera to document peaceful protests, and throughout my journey in the liberated areas and witnessing the barbaric Russian led shelling on Aleppo and experiencing the siege, I heard my voice for the first time. A voice I gained from the revolution. However, this voice sometimes fades away in some situations when we feel broken, lost or helpless.

When I was displaced to Turkey, I lost my voice again. The archived photos and films that I took for 6 years went in vain. It became my personal archive that I will show to my kids and family in the future. However, it will not have any impact in the next 30 or 40 years.

For Sama, the film, revived my hope. It was a tool for change in sake of power. It gave me the chance to make people live 90 mins of our struggle. It had a long-lasting impact on people's hearts and minds. It brought my voice back and it became heard loudly. The most significant thing about this voice is that it is heard among Syrians themselves as it expresses their cause. It is also heard loudly among non-Syrian and presents a clear answer explaining their attitude in solidarity with Syria. The film also offers an image and an understanding for people who think of Syria as a mysterious war zone only.

The conflict between despair and meaningless against hope and taking responsibility is an ongoing conflict. It comes back to the mind with every new incident. The last time was when I made a speech in the Security Council about accountability and justice. After 2 years of screening the film all over the world, and just 20 days before Aleppo eviction anniversary, the same questions came to my mind 'why should I take a part? What difference could I make?' Until today I don't have an answer. I am aware that my speech will not change anything among the audience at the Security council Session. But I had a huge feeling of responsibility that pushed me to talk. The feeling that we should continue talking about the Syrian cause pushed me further. I wasn't addressing the Security council, I was addressing the people, talking to them and expressing their inner feelings. It was a shout from the Syrian peoples' deep hearts but was muted by the borders. Maybe my speech wasn't heard at the Security Council, but it has expressed millions of Syrian voices who challenged the expression 'the walls have ears', and challenged the fear of the Syrian walls that until today hide thousands of detainees and forcibly disappeared people.

My participation didn't leave a political impact, but it was very effective socially because the youth felt that voices coming from outside Syria are able to portray their situation and express their cause.

Being present in such places is an added challenge for youth; a challenge to find a new image and a meaning that is able to overcome our negative feelings of loss and denial. It is important to continue raising our cause every day, being my voice or the voice of every young woman and man carrying the message all over the world.

I hope that we always listen to each other and hear our voices when we talk, and find new voices and new experiences to represent us and represent Syria. This requires us to be creative and supportive to reach out using various means.
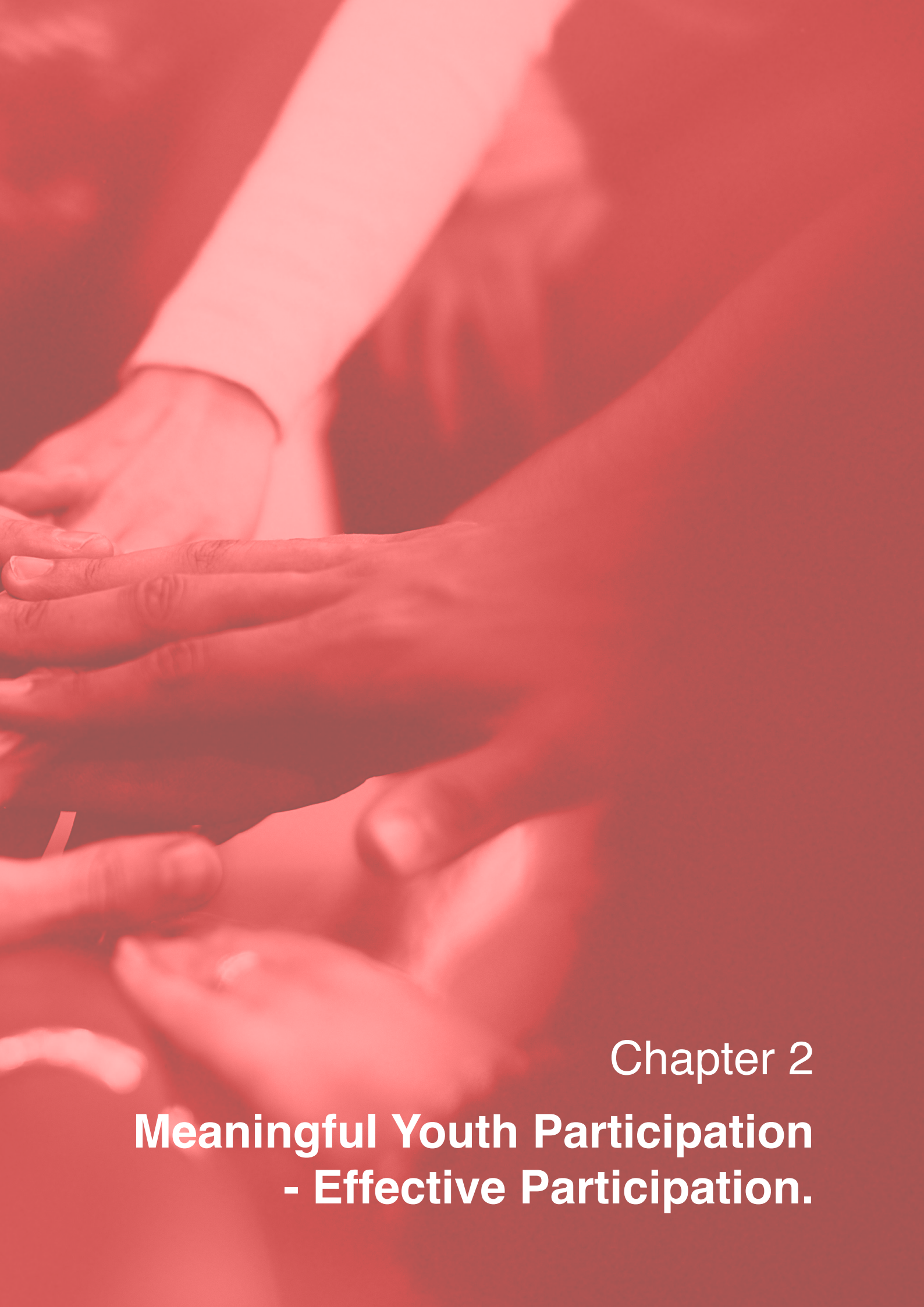
Chapter 2

Meaningful Youth Participation - Effective Participation.

The Definition of Meaningful Participation:

Meaningful participation of youth requires the ability to speak up in a safe space and the existence of a responsive audience.

To reach this end, a parallel work of four different strategic areas is needed which are:

1. Influencing law and policy;

2. Building skills and capacities;

3. Addressing social norms;

4. Supporting mechanisms and opportunities for participation.

The report of The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, "Young people in the region: How to bring them in" shows some important findings about youth engagement. For example, young people in the MENA region have less trust in government than their parents. Results also show a lack of interest in politics among young people in OECD countries.

This is mainly witnessed in youth participation rates in the elections in the MENA region. Statistics show low level of youth voter-less than 40%- in Tunisia, Jordan and Morocco. Moreover, youth are underrepresented in different decision-making bodies. Thus, youth have very limited opportunities to shape decisions related to their future.

The culture of youth involvement in public life, such as volunteering and political participation, should be encouraged from an early age by improving civic education. Such involvement has various positive effects including development of social personal skills, contribution to national development and increasing the legitimacy of political decisions and state institutions .

When do you concider the youth participation is meaningful?
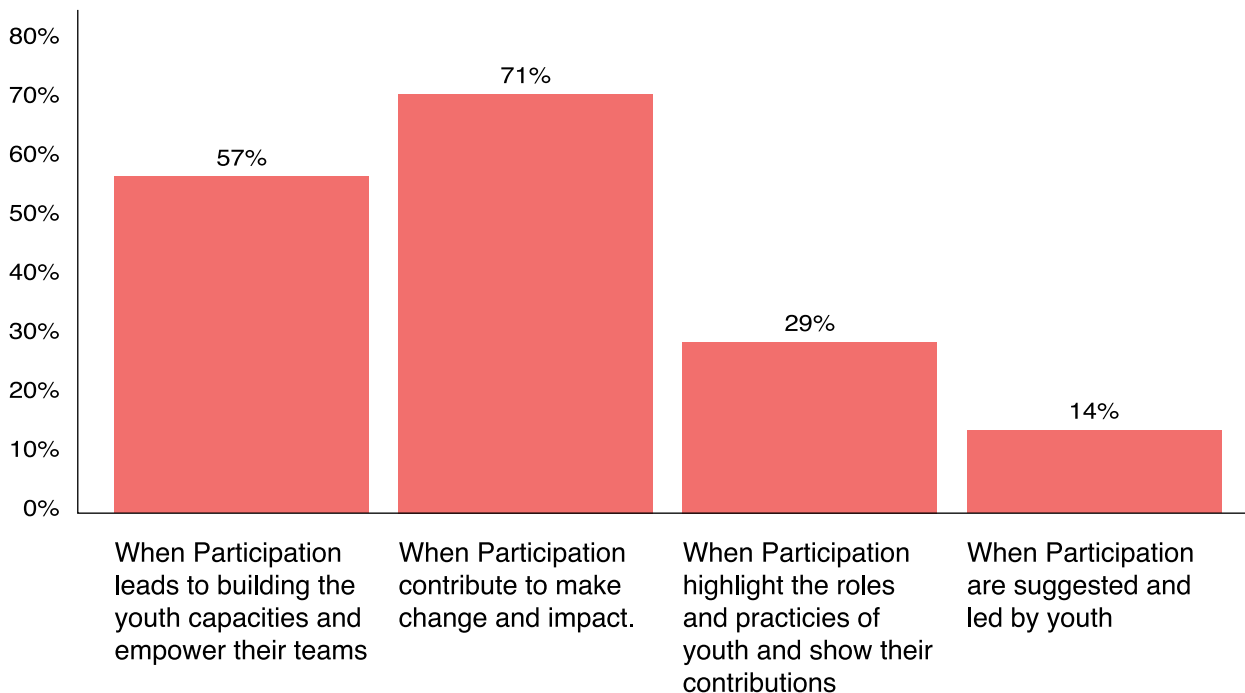
Figure 17: Meaningful Participation

A success story

An empowering environment

Lama was born in Syria, a country that discourage freedom of expression, according to many people. However, Lama was born deaf-mute with zero chances of development. Her parents had provided her with an atmosphere to express herself trough art. Her father, being an artist himself, became the godfather of his daughter's gift. Her mother, being a school teacher, accompanied her through integration process and support Lama in making real friendships beyond the disability.

Lama was cared and loved by her teachers and friends along with her father's support who introduced her to painting basic principles. Then Lama moved to Idlib city to peruse her education in the Cultural Center under the supervisor of the most talented artists.

Her first art exhibition was in a school room within the ceremony of rewarding top achiever students. Her second art exhibition was in The Cultural Center of Jesr al-Shughour which was filmed and presented on the Syrian channel in a TV show called a Syrian Story in 2011. Then she had several exhibitions in different cities and the media was interested in her story.

When war started in Syria, Lama fell a huge pain. Her heart cried for witnessing massacres and experiencing shelling. Being unable to express by words, Lama utilized her talent to portray suffering and the destruction in the country and to depict the struggle for freedom.

She highlighted people's circumstances such as poverty, homelessness and orphanage. She poured all the grief in her paintings and expressed solidarity against injustice.

Like Syrian youth, Lama was able to express herself once support and empowerment tools were available such as the support of her family, the support of her school and the support of institutions that sponsored her talent like the Cultural Center or helped deliver her message like the art exhibitions and media outlet.

Empowerment and the belief in ability should be implanted in youth to be able to express themselves freely by the means of a caring family and empowering institutions and a country that paves the way for creativity and opens spaces for practicing rights.

Reaching youth audiences

How can governments create effective and appropriate approaches to reach youth audiences? what are the different ways to draw on both traditional and modern communications channels?
Effective communication strategies for the general audience can be used to reach the youth audience; however, further development is required to include specific interests of youth to reach them and to provoke their engagement. Governments should seek to increase activities designed to increase two-way communication channels, according to the OECD Recommendations on Open Government, to provide the opportunity and the necessary resources to collaborate during all phases of the program. In other words, the principles of transparency, participation and inclusivity should be the essence of these activities.

Principles for youth communication

1. **Treat them as equals:**
An acknowledgment of youth as full citizens and active change agents in public issues is the first step to guarantee their engagement. Treating them as second-class citizens who lack the experience and knowledge or seriousness will definitely fail to reach the perused aim of maximizing youth participation. While communicating with youth, certain principles are applied. Government should communicate with youth starting from early ages in a clear reason for the communication. The scope of the interaction should be detailed and the expected outcome should be explained. A conversational approach should be adopted and feedback should be given instantly.

2. **Empower, entertain and allow for interaction:**
Several studies show that young people are interested in community-related issues (especially local issues) and social action (e.g.: volunteering, human rights, environment, etc.).

Therefore, open government strategies that aim at engaging youth should focus on topics relevant to youth and attempt to attract youth to broader topics of direct interest to them. Topics should have real and relevant content with a friendly and non-boring presentation. Young people long to see immediate effect, thus, having an instant feedback, is significant for them.

Experts of Non-governmental youth engagement offered some tips to foster youth participation. A safe space free of judgements is necessary for youth to feel comfortable either online or face to face. They also should have clear guidelines on how and where information will be shared. Youth should be encouraged to make decisions, instead of just following instructions. There should be a focus on local / community issues but with clear links to national / international agendas.

Youth are keen to have meaningful participation; however, they believe that organizations and decision makers usually don't ask for their authentic participation and assume that decisions are already made and their voices will be suppressed. Although contributing to decision making is important, youth want to see immediate actions on the ground. Participants in this study took part in various voluntary activities and initiatives.

They measure the impact of their participation by the change they see within the community. They expressed very positive outcomes from participating in different events including building the skills of their peers through training, bringing happiness to the people in need and raising awareness on the benefits of voluntary work and community development. Recently, more support is directed toward youth projects, however, a clear strategy and goals are missing to show methods of engaging youth and addressing their voices in political solutions and possible channels to increase their role in programs.

Youth Awareness of their Roles

The question whether youth are aware of their roles or not has not reached consensus among Syrian NGOs who participated in this study. A group of the participants suggested that the majority of youth are not aware of their roles, they are lost because of the situation in Syria, they have dropped out from school and have no work. Still there are few young males and females taking initiatives and playing massive roles in support and mobilization. On the other hand, Other participants believe that youth are aware of their roles.

The youth of Syria who started a peaceful revolution in 2011 are aware of their social and political roles. While The society – family members and even NGOs- plays a negative role by applying trusteeship and guardianship on youth, the NGOs acknowledge their responsibility in youth awareness raising.

They have provided friendly spaces to youth in the last two years which were a leap towards further participation by offering the opportunity to participate in programs to build leadership and other soft skills.

Currently, youth are playing major roles in the community including building teams and starting their own initiatives and supporting their peers.

> Society consider youth as adults when they give them weapons to fight, but as young and reckless when it comes to civic and political engagement.
>
> Isam Alkateeb, CEO, Kish Malek

The youth today have an active role in civic engagement and voluntary work, and are ready to play bigger roles in political and legal issues. The fear and the concerns that youth might have now are due to the limited learning opportunities and the lack of income generating and employment support.

Do you think youth are aware of their roles?

Some of the Youth are aware	36%
Partially aware	7%
Not Aware	36%
Aware	21%
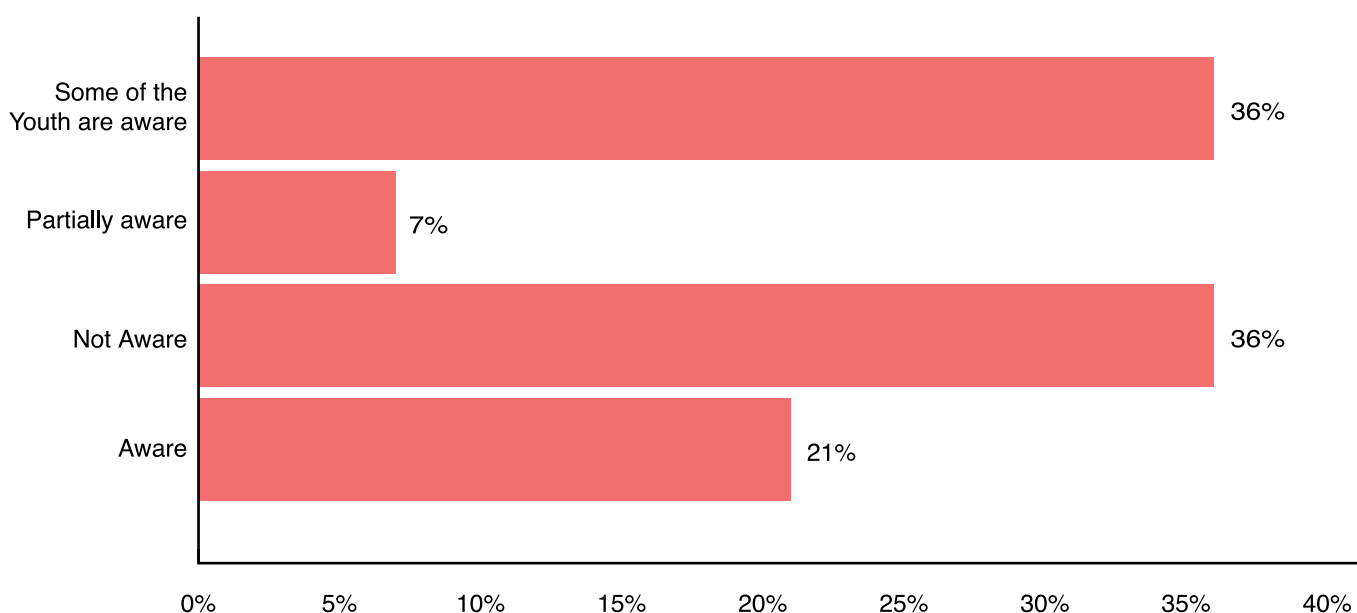
Figure 18: youth awarness abouth their roles

In order to encourage real participation, youth should be prepared to engage in the public sphere through political training, mobilization and mentorship to build political change awareness. Some of the following examples can be implied to expand political space for youth: lowering voting ages; - ensuring high-level of access for youth representatives in decision-making about policies related to them in important sectors such as education, health and employment.

> The question is not what are the roles that youth should take, the question should be what are the roles that youth should not take. Youth should be involved in everything.
>
> Isam Alkateeb, CEO, Kish Malek

Young people growing up in conflict zones are already politicized and they make choices about how to act. For instance, in this research, many participants referred to the opportunity for international travel to attend youth conferences, or non-violent techniques or community development training, as incidents that pushed them to adopt non-violent techniques of struggle, or distracted them from falling into apathy and despair. Such small efforts are very fruitful.

We need to know more about young people›s roles as social connectors and ideological reproducers, who create, shape and pass on social meaning. Networks of youth, including, but not limited to, social media networks, are some already existing channels for peacebuilding messages and they offer much more potential.

Expanding political space to include youth might be risky, however, young people are already exposed to various risks , including and not limited to, the risk of renewed fighting; displacement risk, economically precarious situations risks, the risk of ‹waithood› -never completing the rights of passage to a full adult-and the risks associated with incomplete mourning and unhealed trauma of the war.

Youth participation is a right that should be exercised everywhere; in political negotiations, in peace processes, in transitional justice and in reconstruction efforts for many reasons. First, they had played certain roles during the undergone conflict. Second, they have the right to participate. Third, they have fresh knowledge and thoughts. Last, sustained peace requires intergenerational healing.

Similarly, efforts to increase youth participation should be increased at all levels. Socially, more initiatives and better education are needed to enhance social cohesion. Economically, youth projects should be launched to reduce unemployment. Politically, youth should be encouraged to take leadership positions and to form youth groups that are able influence authorities by the creation of an active Ministry of Youth or youth organizations.

> Youth will be able to contribute to conflict resolution only when they are equipped with tools and are able to utilize them in convestations maong diiferent groups of the community.
>
> Ibrahim alhassan, 27- years old male

A Success Story

Breaking the psychological barrier within the intellectual or the artist who suffered of almost complete marginalization during the war, and then raise hope and determination in these creative people to enable them to face discouraging, negative and unintellectual people, mentally and culturally speaking, who are used to attack every success that doesn't meet their interests with different accusations. This is a real challenge facing the youth in Syria today and had faced intellectuals since the early days of the peaceful movement Through art, I was able to instil the spirit in the souls of many creative people who contributed to many artistic and literary works that have positive impact in the community and I am very proud of.

However, this challenge is not the only one, it is just the beginning because every literary or art work is the outcome of the creative person and the available resources to present the creative work in the correct way as seen by the person who created it. This was very difficult to achieve within the freighting economic situation and the lack of resources in the region.

The idea came originally from the personal and community need to provide an atmosphere that embraces talents and encourages experiences and the desire to present a modern frame that highlights the originality and the creativity of our people

regardless of the impacts the war has had and its consequences on the community on all aspects, and also from the urgent need to correct misconceptions and alleviate stress among the youth in a community worn out by war.

My position on the prevailing situation was that of the challenger who decided to do something out of nothing, the position of the son of this society who took upon himself the message of literature and art and the responsibility of delivering it to society, and then communicating the issues of society through art and literature to the greatest extent possible.

I am Houssam, a displaced young man from Maarat Al-Numan. Since childhood, I loved reading stories; on some occasions, I would go to buy some groceries and enter the Cultural Center, which was near my house. I would sit and read children›s stories, and happiness would overwhelm me when I imagined the heroes of these stories and their adventures.

Every time I passed by the square of the Cultural Center, I felt great awe while looking at a tomb in the middle of the square, and I wanted to know whose grave was that. Then I found out that it was the tomb of the poet of philosophers and the philosopher of poets, Abu Al-Ala Al-Maarri.

I grew up with the love of literature, and with the first experience of love, I felt a great need to express the mixed feelings within me. Suddenly, poetry came to my tongue. I wrote hundreds of love poems. I did not continue writing love poems, as my poems became about bombing, sadness, displacement and exile. Then, I felt that I changed into someone who was overwhelmed by depression and robbed of all the sweetness to his soul. I decided not to write about sadness again; a year passed and I could not write anything. It was a very difficult moment for me when I saw that I had given up my dream and my passion to the void inside my soul that I could not overcome. One day after many tragedies I went through, I found out that I became an uncle, and a month later, I became an uncle again, and frequently I would hear people say "the next generation saw nothing but war!"

I felt a great responsibility towards the dream of childhood and towards the dreams of many children. Those children would not think of a story about a superhero or an imaginary friend or even feel responsibility towards young people; they would not write love poem as teenagers. At that moment, I decided to stick to my dream and seek to launch my small project, so I established, with a group of intellectuals, a small team called "Subh", which means morning in Arabic.

The available options were not many: it is either give up and take the position of an external observer or try to make change and participate in building a society that employs literature and art in expressing its issues. I opted to pursue my dream and try everything I knew in the service of this idea. I first started with building a team that included musicians, actors, writers and singers. We decided to work on zero-cost projects, relying completely on talents and previous experiences, to present and communicate our vision to the community, while preserving our identity and independence. That is why we named the team 'Subh', the Arabic for 'morning', hoping that it will be like a bright morning after the long night of war.

The team wrote, read and played for children to draw a smile on their faces. They also addressed the community with the thoughts and voice of the youth. I expected that it would be impossible to achieve all of this, but my belief in the dream was greater than the impossible. We chose the butterfly as a symbol for the team, with hope to live the success of the team. Six months later, Subh team was able to present plays with the minimum costs, discuss deep issues, and give hope to many children and youth.
Art is a compaction of reality, immortalizing the most important moments with a form of creativity, but more than that, capable of making change.

At this time, the feeling of helplessness has prevailed due to the ferocity of the war and its effects on society, and change has become a necessity. However, the change tools are few and its impact is weak, except for art; It is capable of being creative, innovative and broad-spectrum, beside leaving a long-lasting impression on the audience. A scene in a play, for example, can create a feeling with a deep impact that can always revive that moment. Art can speak for everyone, express things that not everyone can mention, and discuss sensitive issues with a new form of presentation.

The most important thing about art is the interplay of the creativity elements, as it addresses sight, hearing, spirit and mind and can be directed to different ages. In short, Art is the achievement that makes the most impact and change possible, with a great sense of satisfaction from the artist who feels that he can express what he wants at the top of his voice.

The availability of human rights and societal and institutional work training in our region, besides the wide range of online training programs, has made attending such courses accessible. The most important tool that helped to face the challenge was the partnerships that I sought to build with many actors, which believed in and supported an idea, which a few months ago seemed impossible, to become real.

Subh Cultural Team is the sunrise to poets in Syria, it is the theatre of expression and the culture of change.

My message to young people is: Do what you love and what you feel is the right thing, do not wait for the opportunity. Maybe you should create the opportunity. If you didn't believe in it, it will never see the light. Aspire for a better future, it so close. I also wish that youth, in particular, invest in their abilities, skills and talents because only they know what they are able to achieve.

It is necessary to build and activate cultural centres to harness youth culture and talents.
Cultural and artistic projects must be supported.
It is necessary to hold trainings to develop computer skills and benefit from technology.
Citizenship trainings must be held to educate people about their rights and widen their knowledge.
Peace must be achieved, as it is the cornerstone of all of the above.

Motivations:

Participants were asked about the real reason behind their participation in voluntary work or initiatives. Contributing to the community came the first factor which was articulated in different ways such as; empowering the community, organizing the community, raising awareness of the community or making a positive impact in the community.
Other participants aimed at building their own capacities, experiences and networks from joining such activities.
Others believed that community work generates the feeling of relief and self-actualization, in addition to psychological balance. Participants also considered voluntary work, initiatives and community participation as a tool to achieve dreams. Two participants referred to the fear of the future as a reason behind participating.

What are your motivations to have meaningful participation?
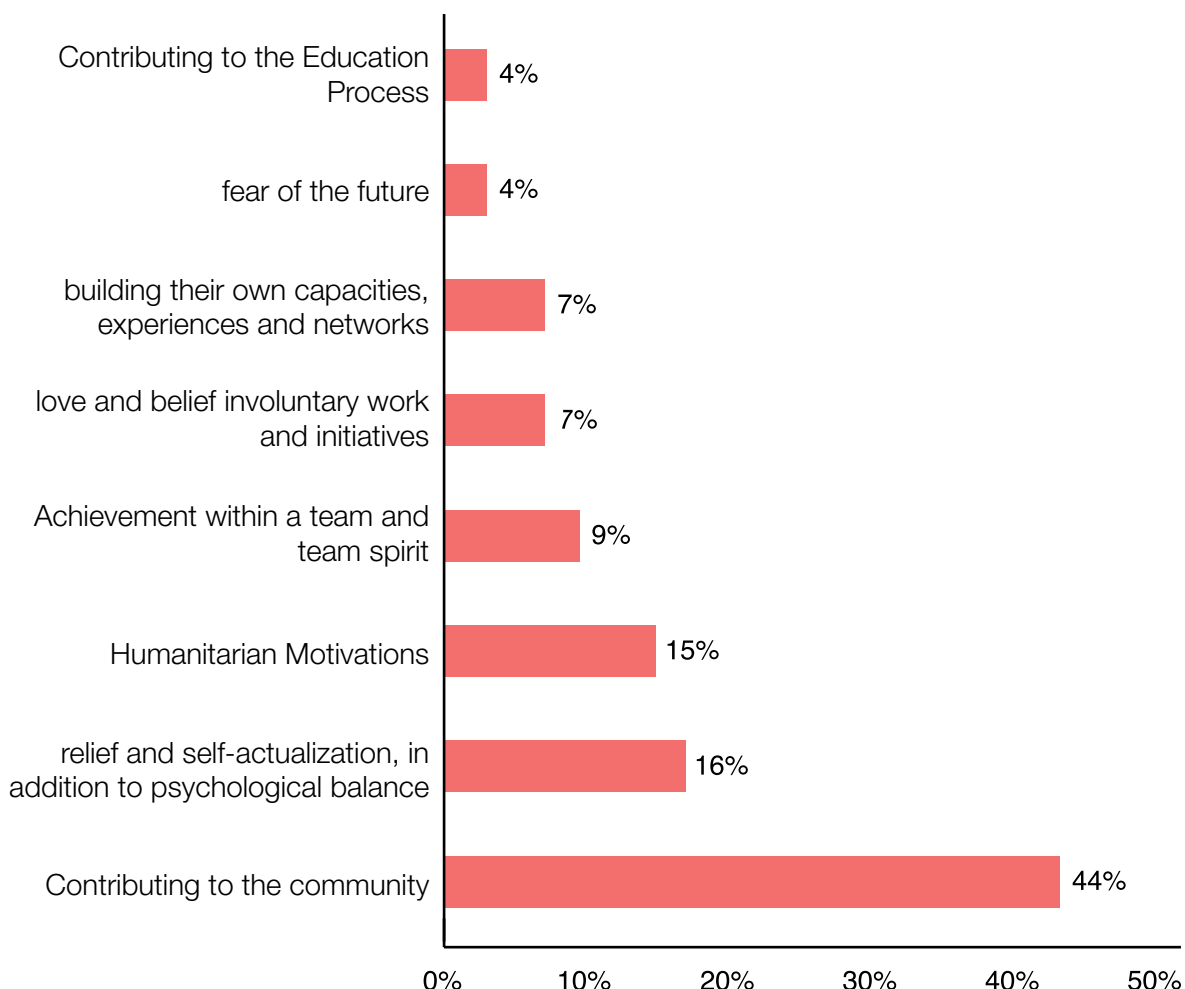
Figure 19: Motivation for Meaningful Participation

Success Story

To transform from a healthy young man into a person with half a body out of a war injury is a challenge that could end the lives of many young people.

Coexisting with society as a different person with one leg and one hand was my big challenge, besides the physical and psychological pain and successive operations. I am no longer able to play the game I love 'football', nor to do the simplest personal things.

The looks of pity from those around me and the crying of my mother are among the most formidable difficulties. Yet, the biggest difficulty is how to rise up again on my single leg. I have been overwhelmed with many questions like showers of bullets ever since the day I was hit by that Russian missile– which I do not want to remember at all.
I wondered whether I could I find a job, play my role in this melancholic society and start

a family, or I should put my dreams aside and withdraw from this life that deprived me of half my body and live by the aid and relief laden with pity?
I made up my mind and chose to join the activities of one of the organizations called "Muwatana for Civil Work." Through the sessions, I got to meet people with disabilities, and we exchanged our experiences. It was the beginning, and a new door was opened for me.

The «We Can" volunteer team embraced me and offered training sessions on life skills, photography, and media appearances. Through this opportunity, I reached my goal and found myself. I knew that I love media, and this helped me enter the labor market and secure a job. Now, I work as a reporter for Rozana Radio.

Any negative situation should be turned into a positive one because I believe in Syria.

My belief in the Syrian revolution provided me with strength and motivation. Moreover, civil society organizations have had a great role in empowering me, and volunteer work and friends in community work have had a great impact on building my capabilities and maintaining my determination.

My message to the community is to secure all the tools and create opportunities for the Syrian youth to reach their aspirations in terms of work and study, to wish the best for all and get rid of the tyranny of the Baath Party, which sowed fear in the minds of our people; 'walls have ears' is one of the most popular proverbs in our culture. It is also important to work on raising our voices and getting them heard and to be a free people who decides by choice with no compulsion.

I was injured after the start of the Syrian revolution when I was 15 years old, and I barely finished primary school. Many young people have missed important stages of their lives, and they need someone to embrace them and support them in discovering their talents, so that they have a fruitful future far from the machine of war and destruction, and their rights are secured not stolen.

People of determination should participate in decision-making processes and political matters, none of them should be exiled, and they should be empowered in the fields of law, international relations, cinema and media, etc to reach their goals.

What prompted me to speak publicly without feeling ashamed shame or fair of their words was to attend intensive trainings provided by several humanitarian organizations. My ambition after five years is to be a role model for all young people with special needs and to be an influencer to help those who lost their passion in life to regain hope.

The fears, Challenges and Concerns for youth participation in peace building and community work.

Child and youth participation in conflict, post-conflict, and peacebuilding can take different forms. Researchers in conflict, violence and peace suggested some examples to foster active participation to peacebuilding by: organizing meetings and discussions on child and youth related issues/ preparing poems, dance, drama, magazines and other creative methods to inform different community members on rights/ promoting dialogue, peer support and peer counselling, etc./ Encouraging all girls and boys to go to school and to study (including children who were formerly associated with armed forces and children with disabilities)/ address discrimination, abuse, violence, and corruption within school and community/ and encourage participation in school governance, local governance, and policies affecting their lives.

Moreover, Researchers   identified eleven key factors that are directly linked to child and youth peacebuilding efforts. Those factors have impact, in different degree, to either promote or hinder peacebuilding efforts:

1. **Attitudes, motivation, and commitment of children and youth and their organizations.** Key success factors included good role models, effective communication, teamwork, and the individuals' responsibility and commitment. On the contrary, a lack of commitment and interest hinders programs. There are many reasons for lack of participation and limited interest in such initiatives. Lack of parental support to participate, transportation difficulties from remote areas, insufficient information and awareness about peacebuilding, a lack of local government support, and poor communication and internal conflicts were identified in Nepal. Shyness, rivalry, a lack of information sharing, and disrespectful communication were identified as hurdles in Colombia.

2. **Capacity, knowledge, skills, and experience of children and youth.** Some children and youth in different countries have high access to training on child rights, leadership skills and peacebuilding who can share their learning with peers to mobilize and engage.
However, insufficient efforts in conflict analysis when developing peacebuilding programs were a challenge. Some initiatives in Nepal failed to identify or address the underlying causes of conflict while conducting a peacebuilding activity, or were poorly linked to peacebuilding awareness. This stresses the importance of conflict analysis and theories of change while implementing them.

3. **Family attitudes and support** is vital for children and youth participation. Parental permission was also important in particular for girls in contexts such as Nepal, as they usually face more restrictions in mobility. Poor families were also reluctant to send their children as they preferred the children to save time and effort to contribute to the family's livelihood.

4. **Cultural attitudes, beliefs, and practices** about gender equality, marriage within tribal groups, and inheritance rights were mentioned as factors affecting peacebuilding efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Social norms and attitudes towards marginalized groups affect the peacebuilding process negatively and significantly.

5. **Key stakeholders' motivation, commitment, and support.** When local governments and authorities show a lack of interest in engaging children and youth, the peacebuilding process will face extra challenges. For example, in some contexts, awareness raising activities were prohibited by local authorities.

6. **Awareness raising, sensitization, and campaigns among key stakeholders** on peace and nonviolence. Such activities in different settings such as school, communities, municipalities, and districts are vital to change the attitudes and practices that contribute to violence and conflict. Different media platforms, including social media, can also create widespread awareness on issues relating to peace among people.

7. **Culture, theater, arts, and sports** and other creative methods are highly effective to engage children and youth. Using various approaches in fun and artistic activities can sustain the motivation among participants to show their talents and also help empower female youth as described by a girl in Nepal' increase young women's self-confidence and can be a source of inspiration for other girls and women in their community."

8. **Government laws, policies, strategies, and provisions** to protect children and youth from different forms of violence such as child marriage, child labor and other discriminative actions. New laws and regulations in line with UN conventions can be developed to directly address the impact of conflict on children and youth. Implementation and monitoring of laws are needed as some parent, officials and community members remain unaware of relevant policies.

9. **Financial and material support** allocated to child and youth participation. More financial means helps reach more participants. Securing financial and logistical support should be accompanied with support from stakeholders and effective partnership with public and private institutions.

10. **Income generation support for marginalized groups** and other skills development opportunities for youth and family members can make activities more successful as suggested in Nepal. Conflict sensitive approaches can help avoid the unintended negative risk and impact of activities on families, in particular the most marginalized families.

11. **Conflict, political instability, and insecurity** hinder child and youth participation in peacebuilding activities as mentioned in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nepal. Armed conflict, strikes and associated risks lead to delays in plans and activities.

The Level of Youth Participation :
Leadership and decision making

Youth participation can be achieved via four different modes;
1) Informing, which is the lowest part of participation that provide youth with information about the projects and programs,
2) consultation where young people are influencing decisions,
3) Involvement and collaboration, where programs are designed by their help and decision made with them and

4) Empowerment where young people leading their own activities completely.

The appropriateness of each mode depends on understanding the local context thoroughly and no single mode is preferred over the rest.   Implementing any of them during humanitarian response should be preceded by good investment in youth readiness, in particular in the case of engaging younger adolescents (between 10-14).

Level of Participation

| MANIPULATE | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |

Most of the societies, the majority of young people have little or no opportunity to express their views.

Adults initiate involving partnership with young people to influence or challenge the process and outcome. Allowing for increasing levels or self-directed actions by young people over a period of time

The young people have more ownership Young people ledad process and outcome.

Figure 20: Level of Participation

Indicators of youth participation- adapted from Youth Development Research Project:

Indicator 1
Organizational decision making and leadership development processes are shaped in partnership with young people

Indicator 2
Young people are supported to be active leaders in the organization

Indicator 3
The participation of young people in organizational decision making is active, purposeful, valued and respected.

Indicator 4
Young people are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation

Indicator 5
Program and activity decision making actively involves young people.

Adapted from: Good Practice Principles For Youth Development Organizations

Table 2: Indicators of youth participation- adapted from Youth Development Research Project

Meaningful participation for young people in planning, implementation and evaluation makes programs more sustainable, successful and relevant. In addition, youth are right-holders. Participation is a basic right for them, that should never be manipulative, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Youth are partners rather than beneficiaries. Duty-takers should help youth realize this right. Such a principle is usually forgotten by humanitarian practitioners themselves and achieving it requires a shift in thinking to be tangible.

All phases of the humanitarian program cycle should consider youth engagement. Organizations should collect sex- and age-disaggregated data according to the age brackets recommendation made in these guidelines and to ensure fair representation in the humanitarian cluster/ group. Therefore, each cluster/ group should appoint an adolescent focal point, ideally a young person with necessary support. Interestingly, most of the NGOs confirms that all their data reports are segregated based on sex and age group; however, unfortunately, none of them of has young male and female representation or focal points from themselves.

The NGOs that participated in the research referred to low levels of participation of youth when the project is not directly youth-related. NGOs generally do general need assessment with desegregated data based on gender. However, the response is general and very technical. For those who are working on community empowerment programs in general and youth projects in specific, they have already started to engage youth in the last two years. The level of participation is increasing gradually with many improvement indicators.

The NGOs mentioned that the first phase of youth projects was developed based on secondary data alone. However, they managed to develop their interventions in the following phase based on the lesson learned. Youth are more involved in the needs assessment; they have received many trainings to improve their inputs to needs assessment and project design.

Some volunteers or participants from previous projects reached an advanced level of empowerment that allowed them to be recruited in the following phase of the projects. Only two organizations started developing ToR or policies to encourage youth meaningful participation, but they are facing difficulties to implement those policies on a high scale, especially in humanitarian projects where cost, time and donor requirements still a challenge.

A broad range age of adolescent includes a lot of demographic variables such as age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status and variety of needs and interest. Effective programs should try to break down barriers to participation and adopt equal, non-discriminative and inclusive approach with youth.

A safe environment with physical, social and emotional support should be available for youth. Facilitators should be attentive to divisions and inequities among participants and should avoid putting them at the risk of family, community and other young people's criticism, in particular for girls. Specialized service should be accessible when working with young people in vulnerable situations. (Do no Harm)

Youth Participation in Project Development
Needs Assessment

Need assessment is a vital tool for community development to identify needs, and provide evidence and engage the public in policy making. However, the high expenses of implementing it is a challenge.

It can also build a sense of local involvement in the community. It also helps the community plan for and implement strategies. Therefore, needs assessment is a helpful process and tool.

Hurras Network

believes in the importance of supporting and empowering adolescents and youth, as it launched Hurras Youth Program to raise awareness of youth rights, empower youth, create a safe environment for them, and enhance useful long-term skills for them. Hurras Youth strategy operates within a three-stage approach: Advocacy, Support, and Empowerment

- A society aware of the importance of youth
- A society supportive for youth projects
- A society that protects young people's rights
- Empowered youth, empowered society

The methodology adopted in this program is based on the following:

- Consultations, discussions and communication with young people as an important tool to explore their views and priorities in a way that helps respond to their expectations and integrate their concerns and issues into the design of program activities.
- Empowered youth: individuals who are mentally and physically healthy, productive and involved, and able to solve their problems when a supportive and nurturing environment is provided for them.

The program has sought to achieve the desired vision through contributing to achieving a qualitative transition for 90 young male and female people from individuals described by the community as 'trouble making groups' to effective community committees that are able to contribute to solving community problems and making change.

The youth community committees were able to implement nearly 180 community initiatives including rehabilitation of playgrounds and public parks, rehabilitation of the cultural center, paving camp roads, organizing awareness campaigns on the issues of safe road crossing, Covid-19 precautionary measures by the use of arts and graffiti, distributing protection kits for children, and organizing art exhibitions.

These committees also contributed to a number of outputs that were approved by a number of donors or research organizations in order to shed more light on the reality and aspirations of young people.

- A research study in cooperation with Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College entitled "Between War and Pandemic: Activating the Agency of Adolescents in Northwest Syria
- Youth challenges questionnaire which resulted in the construction of the matrix of challenges for young people and proposed solutions.
- Focus Group Discussion Report - Youth Situational Assessment in Idlib.

The three committees became famous in attracting other young people and holding periodic meetings with the community protection committees to raise issues that affect them and provide solutions. These meetings were a reason for continuing to expand youth projects in various fields.

Ongoing support and expansion of projects and programs directed at young people in various fields would help empower them with various tools and knowledge that would help them move forward in bringing about the positive change that they aspire to in their societies.Our role as people of sound mind is to provide fair opportunities for today›s youth because tomorrow is theirs.

Hurras Network - Youth Program - Idlib (Maarat Misrin - Kafr Takharim - Armanaz) 2018-2021

Young people in strategic planning

Service learning works are classroom activities related to real life through providing an educational experience aim at educate students about their role in the community. Service learning projects include class projects that are related to community, research projects on related issues and school curriculums sensitive to community needs.

Service learning, despite being so useful, ends up with very limited effects as people fail to integrate this service into the community, local policy making and other group work skills. To fill this gap, projects should increase teamwork among students, teachers and community members. Moreover, achieving maximum value from service learning requires a shift from youth being passive recipients to team active members.

Merging community service learning with community needs assessment is a new model. Involving local school students

The Marriage of Needs Assessment and Service Learning

in needs assessment can provide some solutions such as expertise in computers, potential respondents and a location for working. It also offers a great opportunity for students to be involved directly in a community-based project.

Students can contribute actively to decision making about different phases of a project while working with different community leaders and groups. In order to successfully build leadership and collaboration skills, the structure of needs assessment should focus on; active participation of students, creating partnerships with other community groups, availability of materials to teach students both community development and needs assessment strategies, involving students in implementing finding after completing the needs assessment and addressing most of the issues of scientific rigor for the needs assessment while maximizing students involvement with other groups.

Service learning works provide students with the opportunity to plan activities which meet their needs, and give them the ability to make decisions to respond to the priorities and needs of the community. This is considered very important because it will give students a sense of ownership and enthusiasm to implement plans and projects at later stages.

Youth for Change_ Planning

Since foundation in 2015, Youth for Change Network (YCN) has been implementing community organizing practices based on the approach of participatory leadership and teamwork. From the first day, youth were involved in developing steps for action through many training workshops that outlined the basic strategic plan, that is to reach an empowered and effective society capable of change and contribute to decision-making. The snowflake structure was adopted as a distinctive structural framework in which young people set out to train their peers and work together to assess needs and work with the community.

The result of the evaluation during the first year was that more than 80% of the nearly 100 youth were committed to volunteering within the Youth Change Network as a result of their sense of ownership originating from their contribution to decision-making in the early stages of work, as well as their contribution to the planning processes.

After 8 months of work that covered training courses on training skills, community organizing practices, participation and community integration and conflict transformation, and studying development projects, the youth developed a plan to establish 20 community development committees within 20 different geographical areas of their collective selection using the participatory methodologies they had been trained on. They also used the training skills to transfer skills and practices to approximately 200 community members and organize them into community committees. They also conducted a survey of community initiatives, volunteer work and community services which was needed in the community at the time.

As a result of their early participation in planning processes, Youth of Change

Network were able to select representatives for themselves in each committee and were able to develop a participatory strategic planning mechanism, developed and revised annually.

The process of developing the strategic plan in YCN is launched after surveying the opinions concerned people– adolescents, youth, women and the displaced– to identify their priorities and decide on the best implementation means and tactics desired by these groups to achieve their priorities.

Next, proposals are submitted to YCN Board of Directors, which includes specialized coordinators in the areas of training, research, community cohesion, campaigns, advocacy, self-sufficiency projects and the media, so that they, in turn, develop the formulation of the strategic plan and assemble the various ideas in annual programs. After that, the plan is presented to all committees to discuss and approve the final version.

The most important benefit of working with the participatory planning approach is building a strong sense of commitment among the members of the network, which was strongly reflected on the effectiveness of individuals in implementing the strategic plan and with the minimal resources in most cases or with complete dependence on their own resources. With the sense of ownership, the members of the network seemed to implement the plan with strong vigor as it expresses their priorities and issues. The members of the network did not skimp on providing their efforts, time and resources over the past six years to this day.

The relations among the network members have increased. Consequently, community cohesion and family cohesion within the network have improved.

Young people and resource mobilization

Partnership and calls for proposals are helpful means to identify funding opportunities for youth inclusion programs because youth organizations and initiatives require flexible funding. Resource mobilization efforts should target youth-specific program interventions including United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) funding opportunities for Gender and Youth, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and other funding mechanisms.

Good examples of engaging youth by communication and media teams is vital to support advocacy and resources mobilization

The desire of young people to volunteer and participate constitutes an important opportunity for organizations to mobilize youth resources and include them in projects and programs. Young people expressed their desire to participate in administrative volunteer work, as they consider that a large proportion of volunteer opportunities are related to muscle and humanitarian work, but young people want to obtain opportunities to volunteer and learn in administrative and leadership fields within organizations.

Young people have asked for these opportunities in particular during the university stage or directly after graduation in order to enhance and hone their skills and open real opportunities to enter the labor market.

Many organizations have also made it clear that mobilizing young people, especially in the case of an emergency and humanitarian response, has provided wide and flexible opportunities for them to achieve a quick response at a very low cost.

Violet
From volunteering to training and finding job opportunities

Through A volunteering program, young people were empowered in the field of life-saving assistance, specifically first aid and emergency response. Since its launch in 2017, the program has targeted more than 7,000 young people.

The trainings varied between short and long-term training, including:
- Theoretical and practical exercises for first aid
- Advanced training
- Qualifying trainers
- Group camps
- Personal skills training: job interviews, communication skills and presentation skills.

It is worth noting that about 465 people who received the training were able to get jobs inside and outside Violet, forming the main base of the Paramedical and Emergency Response Network in Violet. Violet is currently working to involve medicine and pharmacy students in this program, especially with regard to managing activities and projects through youth themselves. During the work period, a set of added values to the program were achieved, including:
- More than 500,000 volunteer hours in the field of paramedical and emergency response since 2017.
- Building the capacities of the youth participating in the program by training them to become certified trainers for emergency and first aid within the region (50 certified trainers), providing first aid training to the community on a voluntary basis with the aim of qualifying a paramedic in every home (more than 7,000 trainees).
- Empowering university students during their studies by attracting them within this project.

- Involving paramedical teams in emergency and evacuation operations carried out in response to the current conditions (displacement - emergency bombing). This is done on a voluntary basis and to enhance their social responsibility and their role in building society.

Violet Collective Resilience Enhancement Program aims to enhance community resilience by guiding young men and women through positive transition and enabling them to lead in the field of life-saving humanitarian aid, civic and social participation and leadership in order to build the future of Syrian society thoroughly.

Violet Organization, Promoting Community Resilience program , 2017, Northwest Syria (Idlib - Azaz - Armanaz - Jisr Al-Shughur - Darat Azza - Al-Dana - Al-Bab)

Implementation, monitoring and Young people

Youth participation in the implementation process contributes to refining their skills and capabilities, mobilizing their resources and increasing their understanding of the challenges facing project implementation processes. All of this helps give young people a realistic view of the mechanisms of community work, as well as giving organizations an opportunity to benefit directly from the feedback and perspectives of young people.

The participation of young people in the implementation processes leads to the discovery of leadership skills among young people and investing in them more, as it gives young people a living experience and life skills that increase their chances of obtaining employment and job opportunities.

Participatory monitoring activities have many benefits on both young people and programs including: making programs more relevant and effective, improving young people's conditions and benefiting from their viewpoints and experiences, improving intergenerational communication and empathy and personal and community levels.
Indicators should include outcomes specific to adolescents and youth, including some developed by young people themselves.

Youth for Change
Leaders not Beneficiaries

Based on community organizing practices in participatory leadership and the high sense of ownership and participatory planning manner, and because leadership is taking responsibility for empowering others to reach the goal and face challenges collectively, Youth for Change see themselves as leaders within the network, not beneficiaries in the programs and projects but rather a part of the change leadership.

A big part of this feeling resulted from YCN structure, which is reflected in the mechanisms of representatives' election, participatory decision-making mechanisms and levels of responsibility and commitment in volunteer work. It is reflected in the ability of the network leaders to implement the plan as an outcome of their decisions and at the same time encourages learning and accountability as a practice that everyone believes in to make continuous improvement.

The structure of the network consists of 22 committees in northwest Syria and 4 committees in southern Turkey. Each committee consists of at least 8 leaders who elect a leader among them to be their representative in the general body. Therefore, there are 26 representatives of the general body who meet on a monthly basis to approve the strategic plan at the beginning of the year and monitor the implementation process during the year. Moreover, committee members implement the strategy through joining specialized teams that work in an integral and participatory manner to implement tactics and mobilize resources to reach goals.

YCN leaders evaluate proposals of activities that meet their needs and match their priorities. They collectively and voluntarily cooperate with the community members represented by the voluntary teams and key and influential personalities.

The Snow Flake Structure and Membership of YCN
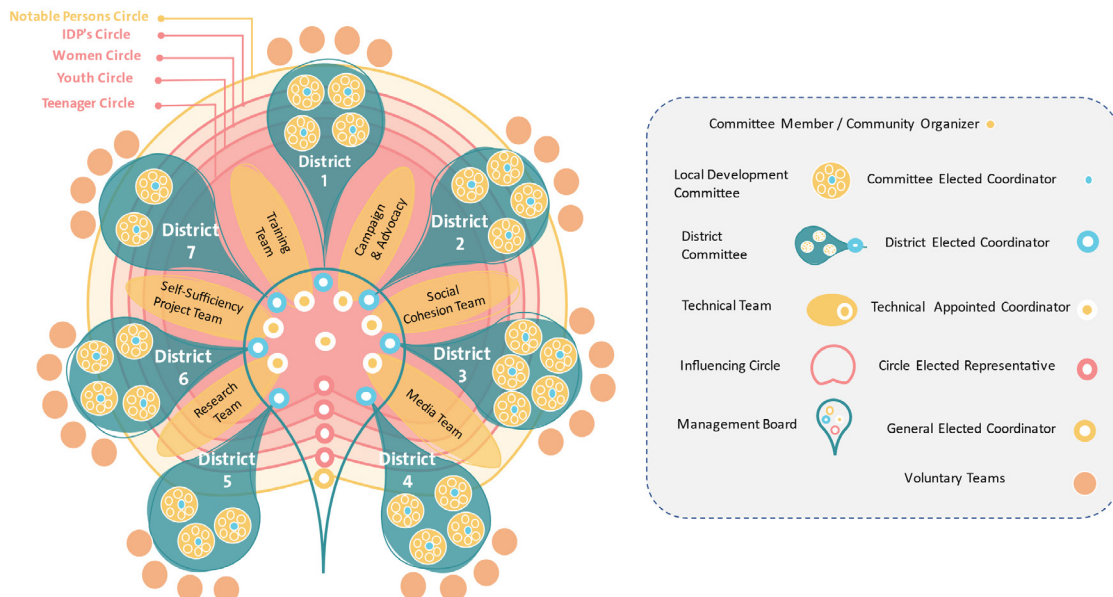
Furthermore, the network has launched the "Guide Me" campaign to rehabilitate road signs in more than 100 geographical points in northwestern Syria to helped displaced people find their destinations without being exposed to danger that could result from crossing red points getting lost on the roads while heading to medical or service facilities. The network leaders, a large part of whom were displaced, in cooperation with local councils, voluntary teams and the traffic police were able to complete this campaign at a cost below $100 in 2018. This success story does not only reflect the ability of the network leaders to voluntarily implement what they planned or their ability to mobilize community resources, but also expresses the values of voluntary work which saved huge sums of money that would have been required to rehabilitate road signs without volunteers, and saved other sums that would have been necessary had it not been for the value of participatory work and partnerships that provided mechanisms from local councils and provided information on direction from traffic police in the area.

Similarly, upon the outbreak of COVID-19, the Youth for Change, in cooperation with volunteer teams in more than 10 regions, launched a wide campaign to raise awareness on the pandemic. By their voluntary efforts, YCN were able to launch many awareness videos and messages via social media and conducted visits to markets, restaurants and public gathering places. The teams' collectively developed plan had a significant impact on the motivation and commitment of the teams in implementing the campaign based on their resources and expertise.

Young people in operational peer review and evaluation

Youth participation is a 'win-win' approach as it contributes to skill development of youth and it helps decision makers to know youth priorities and hear their stories. This all can help widen the scope for work for NGOs. However NGOs should consider several important points while sharing youth stories; who is telling the success stories? Who is deciding which story should be told? Who is deciding on the indicators of success to be measured? What are the barriers that youth face to participate in NGO activities? What are the best practices? What can be done differently in the next projects? Who is doing the evaluation? is it only an action driven by donors, or it is a learning process that youth are leading?

NGOs taking part in this research have indicated that youth participation in project evaluation is a modern approach which needs further development for them. NGOs are still taking baby steps as working with youth has only started 2 years ago. They are considering different methods to improve accountability in order to increase youth participation in the learning and evaluation process.

The sectors where youth are achieving high rate of participating

Youth meaningful participation should be intersectoral with various governmental, non-governmental and private sectors where youth are involved in different programs such as humanitarian and development and peace building; however, in this research we focus on the participation of youth in civic engagement and peace building programs.

We also asked the NGOs about their attempts to institutionalize youth participation in their mandate and mindset. However, the majority of the NGOs didn't manage to include youth in humanitarian work fully. Protection and education programs achieve the highest rates of youth participation as it is feasible to include youth in certain phases of the program such as project design by involving them in needs assessment activities. Youth participation in other humanitarian projects was limited to volunteering in food basket distribution.

Some NGOs have been actually trying to institutionalize youth participation in their mandate or as a part of their leadership approach. In the interviews, they discussed their ability to apply youth participation recommendations in future. These few NGOs have already started to play leading roles to institutionalize youth participation principles through advocating and talking about youth meaningful participation in conferences and meetings and internally by encouraging integrating youth in all programs and by involving youth in practice as well. They are also working to improve their mandate to institutionalize the youth participation agenda mainly through including youth perspectives in their organization work and by disaggregating the data to include age groups in the reports.

Luckily, the operative capacities are applied through assigning youth officers and specialists in their organizations; however, those staff members are still projects based and are not a part of a dedicated core team. The only way that NGOs are establishing partnerships is through supporting youth led initiatives and voluntary teams, and they started some learning exchange and training opportunities in a very low scale with very few NGOs who are interested in Youth projects. NGOs have recently started to localize youth projects and to foster youth empowerment among local actors, mainly youth led teams and CBOs. (Annex 1 Youth, Peace and Security Agenda - Strengthening institutional capacity for implementation - FBA)

Figure 21: institutional capacity of Syrian NGOs working with youth

Youth and civic engagement programs

Civic engagement is generally when people in the community collectively act and interact with public issues and seek to develop the quality of life in a collective manner. This public civic engagement takes different forms of participation such as political participation which include demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, or signing a petition. Non-political forms include volunteering, community service, sports, clubs and cultural associations. Using these various forms, youth can try to improve their social environments. For the sake of this research we considered both forms of civic engagement. Several studies worldwide prove how civic engagement contributes to better mental and physical health of youth engaged in civic life and suggest that youth civic engagement can be related to peacebuilding.

What does it take to highlight the meaningful participation of youth?

1. A shift in the look at youth: organizations should deal with youth as leaders and partners, not as beneficiaries and create the space for youth to lead their own projects.

2. Increased space for youth to reach decision making platforms: youth should have their own representatives; they should have the opportunities to be part of political and nonviolence channels for solutions.

3. Replacing capacity building by capacity sharing concept to emphasize that NGOs believe in youth capacities and build on them. Moreover, capacity sharing should not be through several short training sessions, rather, it should be delivered in training programs that give the opportunities to youth to practice what they learn in positive and creative spaces.

4. Running workshops to educate youth and NGOs on building a better response through sustainable youth programs. Donor education should be part of the capacity sharing process.

5. Organizing more conferences in which youth can be invited to speak directly to decision makers and share their stories and highlight their efforts.

6. Service Mapping to highlight existing youth services in Syria to inform youth about those services and to transfer and share knowledge and practices among different NGOs and youth led organizations and voluntary teams.

Chapter 3

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Definition of Youth Empowerment

Effective youth engagement comes from the opportunities provided by rules, laws and policies. Such practices from concerned entities are responsible for encouraging and guaranteeing citizen participation in general and youth participation in particular. Open Government strategies and initiatives can be a way to foster basic civil rights and liberties. The OECD Recommendations call upon providing equal and fair access to information, consultation and engagement of stakeholders in all phases of the policy-cycle, service design and delivery. They also stress the importance to "proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders" .

However, in Syria, the national government are replaced by local and international NGOs efforts. Thus, the organizations have a bigger responsibility and role to achieve young men and women empowerment.

Consequently, Individual programs within organizations will never be enough to attain goals of youth participation. To do so, it is necessary to move beyond the implementation of ad-hoc and siloed youth initiatives and start mainstreaming a youth perspective in all aspects of organizations' mandates, structures, and operations. Thus, the principles of the youth participation agenda must be incorporated within decisions, practices, and behaviors across organizations. The challenges to achieve this goal include, and not limited to, a lack of political commitment and weak institutional capacity. Therefore, the agenda needs better resources, technical capacities and more commitment.

According to youth who took part in this research, youth feel the real empowerment when they have access and representation in platforms and have their voices not only heard but also have the result of their feedback and contributions implemented. They believe they are empowered when they are equipped with tools and skills to help them lead a stable life.

Youth Empowerment Factors

Participants in the research pointed out that within the absence of structural and institutional change in the society and in the organizations› mindset and culture, empowerment can never be attained. The generation gap resulted in a lack of communication and a negative perspective associated to youth.

To change this perspective, according to many participants, effective practices to engage young males and females in leading and decision-making roles in organizations should take place. Moreover, youth participation in political processes should be supported, and most importantly, intergenerational programs to create a structural change in the society should be implemented.
Effective intergenerational exchange programs should aim at merging different forms of social capital because integrational exchange creates strong and sustainable

bonds among different people which helps increase the feeling of security and self-confidence among them. Intergenerational exchange help create healthy interconnection networks.

> "
>
> If youth lacks experiences and skills, thus NGOs must seek more engagement from them so they can start acquiring them. Failure is part of the empowerment process.
>
> Youth of Change Coordinator.
>
> "

Within their own project proposals, agencies should consider including budget lines for the following points:

- Additional young people as staff (working age) and community volunteers (e.g., to provide training, support, mentoring for their peers)
- Needs assessments that address young people's priorities
- Training for staff on inclusion and meaningful participation of young people
- Accessibility and disability-related accommodations (3–5 per cent of total programme budget)87
- Communications, consultation with young people and feedback mechanisms
- Sub-grants directly to young people and/ or youth-led organizations, for their own projects.

Table 3: Adapted from ISAC, including budget line for youth projects

The skills that youth need

Youth needs a set of skills to be able to contribute to their community. Relative training can help strengthen basic life skills including problem solving, negotiation and dialogue skills. Curricula at school and university can be amended to meet the requirements of a globalized labor market by focusing on active citizenship and self-autonomy such as critical judgment. However, the success of this approach depends on the commitment of and the understanding among officials, teachers and students. limited opportunities to practice dialogue and debate skills hinder the engagement in the decision making process effectively. Organizing periodical meetings with adults can contribute to youth citizenship skills, critical thinking and knowledge.

When youth lack main skills and remain unaware of their important role in the community, they, as a result, hesitate to participate actively and take the lead. A genuine empowerment of youth requires development in various skills as well as a good understanding of conflict resolution with reduced violence in the community.

Participant NGOs in the research stressed the importance of acquiring the necessary skills for youth to achieve their presumed role in the community. According to them, effective communication skills are a priority for youth to make their voices heard. Other skills such as advocacy, public speaking and negotiation are similarly important to express youth thoughts freely and openly. Moreover, problem solving skills, personal and strategic planning skills, time and priorities management and other soft skills were also highlighted by NGOs. Work-related skills are required to increase youth employability such as computer skills, accounting, vocational training and project management. In addition to the social soft skills mentioned above, NGOs emphasized the role of personal skills to help youth face different challenges such as coping mechanisms, self-stimulation and dealing with trauma.

All interviewed organizations agreed on the importance of giving leadership opportunities to youth in different projects, not only youth targeted projects, i.e. all aspects of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts should seek higher engagement of and from youth. Providing leadership opportunities harnesses youth skills and allows NGOs to improve their programs in the shadow of these skills and experiences. And leadership programs should be inclusive not exclusive, in particular for those who have been formerly engaged in violence action and stigmatized in the community. Leadership skills with economic empowerment programs are important to reintegrate them successfully.

Baytna
Youth Participation Program in Civic and Community Initiatives.

As young people face obstacles that prevent them from participating in civic and community initiatives, they believe that their voices will not be heard or taken seriously and that decision-makers may lose interest in responding to their aspirations. Therefore, it was necessary to design projects to develop and promote sustainable development for the newly-formed civil teams.

Baytna Online Program has targeted active teams, represented by university students, to formulate a vision for the present and future, build stable societies, and respond to the specific needs of young people through involving them in the following projects:
- The Capacity-building Project included workshops on topics such as participation in decision-making practices, advocacy, community dialogue, civic education, rights, and duties.
- The Grants Project supported community networks to deliver public presentations and events, mobilize the community, and build solidarity. Moreover, Baytna Program provided grants to members of networks to conduct research, work on integration activities and promote cultural heritage, among other related activities in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Europe.

Vision
The program aims to support active teams (working groups) in civic work and to give individuals, youth, and women opportunities to join and expand these working groups in the future.

The program enables young people to recognize and express their achievements in different contexts, increase their self-respect, and boost their motivation to participate in a learning journey that enables them to build well-formed specialized groups, conduct community initiatives and advocacy campaigns more effectively. The program also supports these active teams (working groups) to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes that affect their rights. Furthermore, working groups are part of the formation, design, implementation, and monitoring of project results with the vision and support of Baytna, ensuring that the project provides a space for interaction with decision-makers – public policy officials.

Theory of Change
If Syrian civil society organizations and individuals are able to meet and organize through a trusted, recognized, and sustainable forum; develop their technical capabilities, knowledge, and skills in public policy and advocacy; implement practical initiatives to support their positions and their defense; the Syrian civil society and moderate activists will have stronger capacities and will be more able to act as a force for democratic change, thus contributing to the achievement of comprehensive peace and stability as well as the promotion of human rights.

Main Goal:
- Empowering Syrians– especially women and youth, whether in neighboring or host countries– to amplify the voices of Syrians inside Syria and defend their issues and rights.
- Supporting active advocacy networks of Syrian civil society causes as well as policy papers and recommendations that represent those causes.

Goals
- Supporting active networks of Syrian civil society organizations, policy and decision-makers, and individuals– especially women and youth– to increase participation in decision-making, public affairs, and policy-making to raise Syrian voices on the ground and link Syrians inside Syria and abroad.

- Building the capacities of Syrian civil society organizations and individuals and increasing their knowledge in the field of advocacy, building networks and initiatives, and political and civic participation.
- Supporting Syrian individuals with the resources necessary to implement advocacy campaigns or initiatives that influence policymaking or strengthen common positions and messages that amplify voices on the ground.

Young people have become able to facilitate dialogue sessions and workshops for the local community on political systems, citizenship, gender, power, and empowerment. The content of training courses is reinforced with real-life examples of active and influential women and girls in civil society. They also focus on the importance of volunteering, team management, and team-building skills; the characteristics of effective leaders; conflict resolution; the concept of peace, dialogue, and nonviolent communication in addition to providing sessions on the electoral process.

It is important to replicate and continue planning youth programs to sustainably impact active networks of teams and the local community for:

- Achieving a wider impact of the policies and recommendations of active community networks.
- Improving the effectiveness and impact of those networks.
- Developing a set of core values among the networks.
- Promoting democracy and civil society values.
- Formulating causes to become clear enough to attract attention.
- More cooperation and exchange of information among the networks.

The institutions that youth need

Young men and women who participated in this study referred to humanitarian organizations as the most important institutions which provide support for them, while others consider that there is not real support provided for youth, and efforts are coming from voluntary teams only. Some people identified individuals i.e. friends and peers to be the only source of support.

The youth mentioned their needs for institutions such as youth clubs to provide a safe space for discussions. They also mentioned youth support committees and youth empowerment centers as needed institutions, in addition to organizations that support initiatives of youth voluntary teams.

The young males and females also highlighted the importance of governmental bodies to play their roles in regards to youth empowerment and the role of unions and syndicates especially for fresh graduates. They emphasized the importance of establishing institutions that are specialized in youth empowerment.

From the perspective of local NGOs, most of the participants stressed the importance of cultural centers to provide required tools, skills and space for dialogue. The existence of sport clubs for energetic sportive youth was also mentioned. The LNGOs emphasized the importance of having nontraditional roles for NGOs, unions and syndicates in the current situation in Syria. Youth should have genuine representation in these bodies of civic and political sphere. The LNGOs referred to political parties, universities and voluntary teams as empowering spaces that provide the opportunity for youth to practice civic and political rights. They also highlighted the necessity of having a research center to conduct youth related studies.

Comprehensive intersectoral planning to offer youth services under the supervision of the government was also mentioned by NGOs. They believe that real empowerment is a result of integrated efforts in health, education, economic and other ministries/sectors. Coordination among different actors is important to fill the gap and maximize the usefulness of these efforts.

NGOs were asked about the ability to create partnerships and support like-minded actors that are trying to implement and improve Youth programs. Most NGOs expressed interest in coordination and collaborating with likeminded actors. Actually, some of them have already started on a low scale coordination with other actors on similar projects. However, such collaboration remained restricted to providing extra technical qualifications such as certain training or providing access to certain groups, for example some NGOs have high access to female youth or people with disabilities.

Voices coming from youth themselves and from NGOs stressed the importance of direct communication between youth and decision-makers. Such a rapid and direct communication can be facilitated by certain institutions and other channels which help governments and NGOs. There are a variety of ways to communicate with youth in open government strategies. Using traditional forms, e.g.: press releases, press conferences, websites and media appearances – to reach youth is not among the most effective forms. On the contrary, communicating with youth requires a set of new forms tailored to their specific needs. These include: official structures such as youth councils, which use youth representatives to represent young people's perspectives; collaborative projects where young people and adults work together to run projects or make decisions; deliberative programmes, which seek to bring together a wide range of youth representing diverse backgrounds in order to debate a particular issue or influence a particular policy; digital participation, whereby young people are engaged around online tools and platforms, such as polls, data exchanges and online

campaigns; and activism, whereby young people take part in campaigning groups or protest movements in attempts to influence outcomes, either formally or informally. Activism is least likely to be relevant to government communications, although governments may adopt some of the methods and approaches of activist movements in order to encourage young people to actively play a role in their society and community.

None of the above-mentioned channels to reach youth is more effective or better suited to give effective results on its own. Rather, researchers suggest using a mix of these channels while monitoring inclusiveness, sustainability, empowerment and focus towards presumed goals. Activities and channels of youth communication should be focusing on youth and designed for them through regular genuine participation. Successful communication can be achieved by programs that incorporate youth representation, leadership, initiative and decision making. Running pilot programs can help ensure the availability of sufficient resources and allows the government to test the availability of sufficient partners on the ground.

Channel	Advantages	Challenges
Youth councils	Effective at building active citizenship and creating long-term relationships; high-quality input driven by long-term commitment to participate	Limited reach (especially to vulnerable youth); requires significant commitment in time and resources
Collaborative projects	Effective in providing young people with useful skills and experiences; successful models can be rolled out more widely	Require long-term commitment of adult partners; can be difficult to extend beyond the community level
Deliberative projects	Particularly effective in building trust / engagement with marginalised groups; can be used to solicit quality engagement on a particular issue within a set timeframe	Require trusted civil society partners to manage; need to ensure sufficient time is built in to project for effective engagement
Digital participation	Effective at reaching a large and diverse audience; quick to deploy; requires less financial capacity	Requires active monitoring to prevent conversations going off track; more challenging to monitor long-term impact and engagement
Activism	Effective in building a sense of shared identity among participants; builds awareness quickly of important issues	Can be hijacked by loudest voices; resistant to control by official channels

Table 4: adapted from Engaging Young People in Open Government: a communication guide .

Syrian Platform for Training

I'm Bilal Jibero, 33 years old, founder of the Syrian Platform for Volunteering Training.

Throughout the years I spent in the field of humanitarian aid helping our people, I realized that the best way to support them was to build young people's capacity through professional training courses and activate the role of education in society so that youth people can enter the labor market and depend on themselves. To this end, I established the Syrian Platform for Volunteer Training in July of 2020.

The idea emerged after observing the conditions in society and studying the youth community. What increased the focus to put the idea into action was the outbreak of COVID-19 and the lockdown that made people stay at home, where the environment was suitable for young people to develop academic and professional skills through online training courses.

The Syrian platform was established to meet the needs of young people and qualify them to enter the labor market and support the community with young people full of the energy to learn and work. With the support of experienced young people, the platform was launched in July 2020 to build the youths' capacities and help them overcome their challenging conditions through training and education. The platform was also a bridge that linked qualified and experienced academic trainers to young people who were in dire need of training.

The platform provided a stable communication environment for distance education through the available training programs, facilitating the access of a large group of young people to a variety of training courses without incurring the burden of transportation and costs.

The platform focused on the most important needs of young people and developed a training plan for those needs. It launched management, Turkish language, programming, and computer skills courses, in addition to first aid and physical therapy training, which contributed to helping many young people sharpen their skills, increase their expertise, and strengthen their chances of entering the labor market.

The number of young people participating in the training courses reached 10,000 people from different countries (Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, the Gulf states, and some African countries).

Moreover, the platform won several awards, as it was among the 5 best volunteer Syrian projects at the Pioneers Conference (Istanbul), and it also received an honorary shield from Violet Organization.

After the success of the platform, a distinctive educational project was launched to support students who have dropped out of school, especially secondary school students, due to the conditions of displacement and war that forced them to work to support their families. The platform focused on this vulnerable group, as it developed a plan to provide evening classes online to these students.

The education team includes specialized teachers who have good experience in modern teaching methods and a group of volunteers who coordinates the educational process ensuring the smooth running of the project. The project supported more than 750 students in the 2020-2021 academic year with the efforts of 50 volunteer teachers, and now after this success, it continues for the second academic year 2021-2022.

The platform still provides the training courses that young people need and seeks to create the best environment for qualifying and educating them, thus contributing to the development and the prosperity of society.

Darna (Education Program)

As a result of the continuous bombardment, I was forced to flee my home village, Kafr Nouran, and move to the city of Atarib, where I had to drop out of high school due to the high costs of private education institutes and private schools. Therefore, I was deprived from the chance of pursuing my dream and continuing my studies.

One day I heard about the free education courses provided by Darna organization to dropouts to fill their education gaps and help them resume their studies, so I immediately enrolled in Mathematics, English, Arabic, and Physics classes.Attending these courses contributed to filling the education gap that I had.

The support of the teachers, who were very cooperative and answered all my questions and inquiries during the classes, was of great importance to overcome all the challenges I went through.

After that, I was able to enter the final exam for the secondary certificate and got an excellent score of 238/240, which qualified me to be admitted to the school of Medicine and to achieve the dream that I had always pursued.

I hope all students, especially dropouts, can always get access to such free educational services to help them achieve their dreams and pursue their education.

The Programs that youth need

The participants in this study focused on the importance of continuous and long-term programs for real empowerment. They emphasized that short training programs that are not followed by practical opportunities often end without achieving any significant empowerment.

They also focused on the importance of long-term programs that qualify them to enter into the labor market and increase their political participation and ability to contribute to decision-making process, such as entrepreneurship programs, capacity building and life skills programs, vocational training programs, and labor market entry programs.

Learning and development Programs:

Effective youth development programs emphasize on utilizing existing strengths, capacities and skills to reach a lifelong learning approach. In order to have quality outcomes, leader training and engagement of young participants in their own training is essential. Age and developmental phases should be considered in fun, safe and life-related activities. The following indicators help ensure the quality of the program:

Table 6: Adapted from: Good Practice Principles For Youth Development Organizations .

Key features of successful programs

Opportunities for the development of relationships
• Appropriate time for development of relationships and breaking down stereotypical views
• Activity as a vehicle for relationship development
• Attention to the nature and quality of relationships, e.g. non-judgmental
• Development of reciprocity

Availability of a range of support
• Organizational support
• Broad community support

Opportunities to do a range of things together
• Help break the ice
• Create a sense of the capabilities of each participant
• Engage in practical and physical activities

Take account of program specific issues
• Provide activities relevant to groups who may be reluctant to participate (e.g. males)
• Explore ways for constraints to open up creative possibilities (e.g. language differences)
• Awareness that gender and culture may shape the way leadership roles and social relationships are formed.

indicators to ensure the quality of the program:

Indicator 1: prioritizing providing learning and development activities.
Indicator 2: placing an individual development plan to recognize each participant›s strengths and help him/her achieve their development goals.
Indicator 3: identifying the core values and skills needed by leaders and providing each training requirements.
Indicator 4: having and following a planning strategy incorporated with the structure of training and development.
Indicator 5: providing a safe environment for participants.
Indicator 6: using supportive and integrated approaches to learning and development.
Indicator 7: building positive learning outcomes by well-structured activities that increase self-responsibility.
Indicator 8: easy access of program leaders to mentoring, support and training.
Indicator 9: having an international positive view of the future by meaningful and related fun activities.

Darna work

I'm 27 years old young man displaced from Hass to the city of Maarat Misrin. I studied at the Engineering Institute, at the Mechanic Department and graduated in 2016.

After graduation, I worked in several jobs; one of them was in a marble factory, which was a tough one. I had difficulties securing income for my family, and I was constantly looking forward to finding a job in humanitarian organizations.

One night, while browsing social media (Facebook), I saw an advertisement for Darna services, so I went to their center in Maarrat Misrin to register for training courses. My goal was to gain information and experience to be qualified to enter the labor market.

The administrative assistant at Darna explained the available services including the work grant. So, I decided to enroll in the following training courses: ICDL, Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Management, Life Skills, Parenting Skills, and Accounting.

I aspired to obtain a work grant at the center to get the necessary experience to work at NGOs. The online modality of the courses helped me attend the training and work at the same time. Moreover, through these services, I got a lot of information, learned how to write a project proposal and manage it financially, and gained good knowledge in the field of monitoring and evaluation. The Life Skills training was a big leap for me as I was facing difficult circumstances and my daily life was full of stress.

I also acquired the necessary skills to communicate with others effectively, deal with life difficulties, and manage time. Moreover, the Parenting Skills training had a positive impact on my behavior in dealing with my children. I also learned how to understand their needs and how they think. By the end of this training experience, I felt that I was ready to enter the labor market and get a job. After a while, the center offered me a work grant; I was extremely happy at that moment. I worked at Darna Center as an administrative intern for three months. This opportunity, which I had always been waiting for, was a new start in my life and helped me accumulate more skills and experiences.

On my first day at work, the staff welcomed me and helped me perform my tasks. Through this experience, I learned multitasking, as I could use office programs, write reports, verify data, in addition to preparing the meeting room, archiving, and maintaining inventory in the center.

I think I fulfilled my share of my dreams by joining Darna Center, where I wrote my CV, learned from coaches, and started applying for other jobs. My happiness was indescribable when ACTED organization sent me a job offer as a Distribution Officer. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Darna organization for providing free services, helping young people, and enabling them to enter the labor market. The training courses, the internship with Darna, and getting the job at ACTED boosted my self-confidence, made me realize that I'm able to achieve, and helped me become a role model for my colleagues and friends in the pursuit of success and self-affirmation.

Through my experience, I would like to continue these training programs that support young people to realize themselves and find job opportunities. I also advise all young people not to give up and look for appropriate services that meet their needs.

Civic Engagement Programs:

The Youth Empowerment Solutions for Peaceful Communities (YES) Project is a program where youth and adults can work together on community improvement projects in settings such as neighborhoods. In such practices, community-led efforts can reward positive adults' behavior, thus youth can be encouraged to follow certain prosocial models. Media coverage of these projects can both increase adults› engagement in prosocial behaviors and increase youth exposure to such positive examples.

Rama's Success Story

Date of writing the success story: 01/27/2021
Rama is a 16-year-old girl who joined the Adolescent Empowerment Project in Termanin.

At the beginning of her enrollment, she was showing signs of anxiety and distraction, as well as sadness and isolation. After a period of training that covered the needs of young people, such as skills of correct thinking, thinking errors, self-knowledge and building confidence, Rama began to show a remarkable improvement in her behavior and ability to better integrate with her peers. When visiting her family to make an assessment about the impact of The Roya Project on their daughter, her mother said «Rama has changed very much, I think that she has become aware, has started to talk about her ambitions, and is dealing with us in a good way.»

Rama began to shake off the depression that had been controlling her as a result of the lack of interaction with her family and her few friends. Furthermore, the fact that she is the eldest of her siblings made her feel the pressure of responsibility. However, her life has changed after the experience at The Roya Center, where she learned the methods of thinking, forming friendships, how to cope with pressures, and planning for her life.

Rama says «I have always felt upset and failed to carry out my responsibilities, but after the training I received at Roya, I changed my lifestyle and the way I deal with my family and friends. Through the activities of the project, especially the reading club. I benefited a lot and expanded my knowledge and experience.'

Rama added "What distinguishes The Roya Center from others is the wonderful treatment of the coaches and management. They show us great interest, listen to us

without any boredom, and create a study environment that is unavailable anywhere else, especially in these circumstances." Asked about friendships, Rama said "The Roya Center has allowed me to get to know many wonderful girls, who showed me support to face life with hope and make me feel loved."

Rama is now a high school student and is also preparing for the high school certificate exams.
She constantly reads books, speaks with clear confidence, and has regained her balance. She is no longer shy when expressing her feelings. She participates in activities and meetings with personal strength and clear awareness and is committed to coming to the center constantly as she considers it a youth friendly environment and has a sense of belonging to the Roya Center.

The Roya project is implemented in four basic phases over two years, a summer phase and a winter phase each year, in which adolescents gather in safe centers equipped with training and protection tools both in Syria and Turkey.

By the end of the program, participants will have acquired the skills and knowledge that enable them to pursue their academic life. The program targets groups according to specific selection criteria, viz.
• To be 12 years old and have completed basic education.
• To have practical and academic skills.
• To be able to interact with the provided program.
• To show commitment to the program.

The program has been developed based on a needs assessment that explored the reality of Syrian adolescents and their needs in Syria and in neighboring countries. Accordingly, a special curriculum was prepared by academics specialized in education and psychological counseling, as well as workers in the field of adolescent rehabilitation, based on proposals and recommendations of trainers in the field of adolescents.
After that, the curriculum was evaluated by an external group of academic specialists in psychology, education and curricula. The curriculum contains special guides for each facilitator and supervisor at the center and the families as well explaining activities and roles.
The curriculum consists of 5 themes:
1. Interpersonal skills and thinking,
2. Social skills,
3. Core of values and ethics,
4. Identity and mission,
5. Career path.

In measuring impact, a set of curriculum-specific scales are used.
• A scientific scale for each skill applied to the adolescent to measure the related impact and the outcome of the training.
• A specific scale to parents to show the impact of the program on the behavior of adolescents.
• A specific scale for facilitators to understand the impact of training.
•

Within the Roya program, communication with parents is considered essential and is carried out through WhatsApp groups. Moreover, parents are offered a series of workshops on developing their educational skills and dealing with this age group according to a training guide prepared for this purpose.

Adolescence is an important phase in which the knowledge and skills acquired form the basis of young people's aspirations. As we need an aware generation capable of change and rebuilding syria, the Roya project was developed to empower Syrian youths.

The legislations and policies that youth need:

Integrated youth strategies to provide youth with the required capacities and opportunities to foster active participation in social, economic and political activities are the means to face current intersectoral challenges. Assigning clear responsibilities for a joint work among ministries, civil society and the private sector through a comprehensive strategy that focuses on youth outcomes is vital to reach a minimum vision. Moreover, youth strategies require the intervention of several ministries and departments with stakeholders, thus, a ministry or unit should be established to ensure that all involved actors share work and share the same objectives and goals.

Because policy outcomes affect young people›s life directly in several ways, integrating their perspective into policies and service design is critical. Working towards responsive policy outcomes comes from recognizing that youth are a heterogeneous group who have diverse needs. Therefore, mainstreaming youth perspectives in formulating new policies should be attained by different tools.

In Syria, with the absence of an active government, the coordination among different ministries to work toward intersectoral youth strategies and policies is a real challenge. The services are provided by local and international NGOs; however, youth perspectives are not prioritized in the coordination among concerned NGOs. This is because most NGOs in the humanitarian field do not integrate youth perspectives in their programing, only NGOs working to support community-based organizations and youth voluntary teams are sensitive to youth groups needs. Although most of the organizations actually segregate collected data based on gender and age groups, this data is not used to customize a specific response that meets youth priorities.

Youth inclusion and participation are limited to few organizations that work in the field of community development or protection; however, still they do not fully engage youth in all phases of the project cycle. More coordination to include the perspectives of youth in all sectors; shelters, livelihood,

education, early recovery, etc, is required, Moreover, there is an urgent need for establishing a specific unit to ensure the existence of clear youth policy that guarantee a meaningful participation of youth, and an effective response to create opportunities for youth among different international and local actors.

NGOs in a country like Syria where central government has a passive role, should work on developing youth polices that respect a set of criteria. Policies should reflect human rights and work in line with global and regional commitments. Policies should also be inclusive to ensure equal opportunities for all people, and encourage, in particular, the participation of vulnerable groups. Meaningful participation of youth should be the center for designing, developing, implementing and monitoring all activities.

Policies should promote gender equality and address political, socio-economic and cultural gender-based disparities. A comprehensive approach with increased collaboration across relevant entities should be adopted in youth participation policies.
They should be based on knowledge and evidence that are regularly updated based on information collection, analysis and dissemination of young women and men situations. There should be adequate and dedicated resources for such projects through coordination and by enabling multi-stakeholder partnerships and shared ownership, lastly, having accountable policies that are regularly monitored and evaluated against specific youth development targets and indicators.

policies and legislations that protect freedom of expression were mentioned by youth participants in this research as an important element for them. They also referred to the high need for policies that encourage voluntary work and mainstream youth involvement among all programs. All this should be accompanied by legislations that stop forcibly recruitment and with a clear quota to guarantee employment for youth within NGOs. A code of conduct for youth that protect their rights and hold all the actors accountable was aslo among youth needs.

Guidelines for Door's Work with Youth and Community Based Organizations

- Youth-led change is the key driver for a more stable and sustainable future.
- Youth and volunteer teams are leaders and partners, not beneficiaries.
- Door works with the community and youth through capacity sharing, rather than capacity building.
- Young people have the right of ownership, rather than Partnership\ membership, as they are the owners of the cause.
- We follow the approach of community organization to build the power of youth as owners of the cause, as Door does not believe in advocacy without youth leadership for change.
- Prioritizing the staffing of youth and volunteers of participants in Door's activities, in line with the standards of competence and human resource procedures according to the requirements of each task and position.
- Volunteers and employees working with Door are not owned by the organization and naturally have the right to volunteer in the community without exposing their organization or team to any kind of harm and in a compatible way with the principles of humanitarian work and Door values.
- Adopting youth perspectives in all projects cannot be realized without active and real participation of youth.
- Young people have the right to choose their stories and express them in their conferences.
- Providing youth with opportunities to practice and gain hands-on experience.
- Working with volunteer teams is the way to achieve the duality of partnership and empowerment, a leading value that is emphasized in all parts of the organization.

Since its foundation, Door has adopted these guiding principles by developing working strategy and policies to achieve broad participation of grassroot organizations and youth in programs and projects.

In 2019

Based on these guiding principles, Door launched the process of experience and capacity sharing with the research and media team and both teams would implement the project activities at a later stage:

- Within the "Enhancing Social Cohesion" project, Door trained a team of researchers within the Youth for Change Foundation, who during the past three years, was able to conduct 7 community research in addition to these guidelines.
- Facilitators and project staff are members of community committees at the Youth of Change Network to ensure they take leadership roles.
- Holding 6 community meetings among the leaders of the community committees.
- Holding 3 networking meetings between the leaders of the volunteer teams and the leaders of the committees both in Syria and Turkey.

In 2020

Door provided more trainings in research field, conflict transformation and peace building, and participatory market study. At the end of the training courses, the trainees held seminars and discussion sessions, including:

- 15 dialogue sessions on 'transforming conflicts in several local issues' in which more than 100 participants joined the sessions.
- 8 sessions on participatory market study in two areas.
- With the participation of 20 researchers, 3 studies were conducted on national identity, social solidarity, support and coaching for community events and volunteer team.
- Holding 10 community meetings among the leaders of the community committees, and 3 networking meetings of the leaders of the volunteer teams and the leaders of the committees in Syria and Turkey.

- Based on the outcomes of the networking sessions of team leaders and leaders of youth of change committees, a campaign to raise awareness Covid-19 pandemic, «The Solution is in Our Hands», was launched and covered more than 10 geographical areas with the participation of more than 300 volunteers across different volunteer teams.
- Launching "Your Role in Change 1" grant on SAY Platform and providing financial and technical support for initiatives on youth roles and civil society in cooperation with 27 volunteer teams.

In 2021

Door provided a training on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda 2250 in cooperation with a member of the Regional Youth Coalition, where 30 young men and women attended the training. The participants led a number of activities after the training:

- 15 community seminars for volunteer teams to raise awareness of Security Council Resolution 2250 on the youth, peace and security agenda.
- Launching 17 community initiatives to promote youth and volunteer teams' implementation of the axes of the Security Council resolution.
- Preparing this research guide through 55 research interviews and 18 focused discussion sessions led by the research team.
- Holding 8 training and discussion sessions on participatory market studies and income generating businesses.
- Continuing to hold community meetings for committee leaders and networking meetings among volunteer team leaders and committee leaders in Syria and Turkey.

Through its programs, Door succeeded in relying entirely on trainees to facilitate sessions and seminars and implement initiatives, campaigns and research, those young people are from Youth of Change committees or other volunteer team leaders.

Research Main Findings:

1. Most of the participating organizations and individuals emphasized that youth definition is linked mainly to productivity, energy and influence. When asked about youth age group, the most recurrent answer among participants indicated that the best representing age group is from 18 to 35 years old. However, some participants abstained from identifying a specific age groups because this might pave the way to manipulate true participation of youth.

2. Some participants referred to the importance of considering the war conditions that youth face which resulted on new roles or altered youth traditional roles impact youth definition and concept.

3. The participants had a general pessimistic attitude towards the current situation of youth as youth are undergoing a state of loss and a terrible situation due to unemployment and limited education opportunities in Syria. Participant also indicated a shift in the roles of youth as they became forced to make a living.

4. In addition to being over-concerned about social media and video games, youth, according to some participants, lack sufficient awareness and expertise.

5. Another overview from participants depicted youth as ambitious energetic active agents; however, their full potentials are uncovered yet.

6. The hopeful image of youth is to get suitable job opportunities and become more active and involved.

7. The role models among youth were various including contemporary roles models, or family members or historical characters. The general features cutting across all contemporary role models was being involved in leadership and community projects either in Syria or in the Arab World.

8. Teachers, trainers and managers of civil society organizations were mentioned among the role models.

9. The most important characteristics for participants when identifying role models were:
a. Important values such as positivity, honesty, faithfulness and independence.
b. Some role models were identified due to having personal characteristics such as organizing skills and clear gaol in mind or having a clear project.

10. The most significant features in identifying a role model:
a. Enjoying active citizenship and community responsibility.
b. Maintaining a positive mindset or pattern on thinking.
c. Maintaining leadership and personal skills.
d. Being involved with youth and able to foster their participation .
e. Having an evidence-based opinion instead of having a personal unsupported opinion.
f. Being able to influence others' thoughts and encourage them.

11. Besides security challenges and lack of true support in such poor livelihood conditions, a fear of the unknown future and fear of criticism were widely spread among participants.

12. Fear of exploitation was also mentioned, whether it is exploiting youth in volunteer work for personal interests or exploiting them through conditional or ideological funding.

13. Youth mainly depend on their work determination to face different challenges. They rely on cooperation with other teams and effective partnership and networks. They also rely on personal skills such as patience, experience and leadership skills in dealing with challenges. Family and community support are another helping factor in facing challenges. Participant also stated that having a vivid goal promotes their determination and increases their resilience.

14. The right to meaningful participation and freedom of expression were among the most important rights highlighted by participants as being essential rights that help them attain other rights. The right to education came at the top of other rights because, according to them, an educated person can know and reach his rights. Many rights were mentioned as essential human rights such as the right to decent life and freedom of movement. It is worth mentioning that participants didn't have a clear reference to rely on when discussing their rights, instead they depended on their personal experiences.

15. Youth are taking huge roles related to founding teams, launching initiatives and supporting peers. They also take an effective role in social integration and volunteer work. They are ready to take bigger roles in legal and political issues. Limitation to their roles are lack of education opportunities, lack of income-generating opportunities and lack of job opportunities. Youth can play a huge role in community outreach and reformulating ideas as they are able to formulate and disseminate social meanings. Youth networks, including social media, are significant channels to send peacebuilding messages.

16. Youth mainly focused on long projects that qualify them to enter the labour market and foster their political participation and their ability to contribute to decision making such as entrepreneurship programs, capacity building and life skills programs, vocational training programs and employment skills programs.

17. Educational institutions came at the top of the list of required institutions for youth (such as universities and vocational institutes), and cultural artistic centres and community centres. Some organizations stressed the role of sports centres to harness youth energies. Youth also demanded youth centres that creates safe spaces for discussions, besides youth special empowerment centres. Participants also emphasized the importance of government bodies including syndicates and unions in particular for fresh graduates.

18. The participants referred to required communication skills with audience such as public speaking, negotiation and persuasion skills; and life skills such as planning, problem solving and priorities and time management skills; labour market skills such as accounting, computer skills and project management skills; and dealing with challenges skills such as dealing with pressures, coping strategies and self-stimulation.

19. Youth demanded general protection policies and volunteering polices (such as The volunteer Charter). Some organization mentioned the importance of having clear procedures and policies to involve youth in humanitarian and development work. Policies should reflect human rights and secure equal opportunities for all, policies that secure meaningful participation of youth in all project phases; designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Policies should stress an intersectoral participatory approach among all sectors that work with youth.

20. Effective intergenerational exchange programs should aim at merging different forms of social capital because integrational exchange creates strong and sustainable bonds among different people which helps increase the feeling of security and self-confidence among them. Intergenerational exchange help create healthy interconnection networks.

21. Regardless of using varied tools and depending on Participatory Action Research PAR in designing this guideline, participants were hesitant to give profound information on their contribution either out of despair or out of fear, sometimes it was out of underestimating the impact of youth contributions. On the organizations level, there was very few numbers of written success stories.

Recommendation for active implementation of UNSCR2250

Many participating VTs never heard of UNSCR2250 resolution before taking part in the interview or engaging in local discussions about this resolution.

Most of the recommendations suggested the following:

1. **Inclusiveness**
   a. To set clear policies to cease favouritism in the recruitment process.
   b. To diversify projects and programs implementation locations.

2. **Partnership**
   a. To establish youth offices in organizations.
   b. To launch joint programs between organizations and VTs.
   c. To promote partnerships and networking with local and international civil society organizations.

3. **Participation**
   a. To seek higher participation of youth in projects.
   b. To engage youth in youth needs assessments.

c. To activate youth discussions.
d. To resume youth capacity buildings through awareness raising of Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and to launch peace ambassadors' initiatives, 2250 ambassadors.
e. To engage youth in all sectors to promote their participation in initiatives that aim at dealing with various community issues not youth related issues only.
f. To developed an information guide or a training guide regarding Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Syria.
g. To develop a strategy for the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Syria.
h. To create a blog on SAY platform to offer volunteer opportunities by providing links to organizations accounts.
i. To create content on peacebuilding and use it to spread peace culture, such as podcasts.
j. To establishing a local radio channel inside Syria that focuses on Youth, Peace and Security Agenda to spread peace culture.

Recommendations for Donors

1. To focus on sustainable projects such as livelihood and small enterprise and decrease food basket dependence. To shift from grants to loans and to highlight projects impacts not only deliverables.

2. To provide more vocational training to increase employability

3. To Promote mechanism of implementing international resolution in Syria for example UNSCR2250.

4. To support youth initiatives and establish a youth parliament.

5. To address education issue/challenges in particular the ones that concern youth.

6. To reconsider fund conditions and mechanisms, and to support the VTs core establishment fund in order to ensure sustainability.

Recommendation for Organizations

Project Development

1. To deal with youth as right holders and leaders not as beneficiaries or assets or tools by engaging them in all phases of the project cycle.

2. To build youth capacities of participatory problem analysis and problem solving and participatory needs assessments and to make learning opportunities accessible for youth on project design, management and implementation skills.

3. To foster leadership roles among youth in all phases of peacebuilding process. To use technology and creative ways to expand youth engagement prospects in peace building process and digital discussions.

Training, Education and Research

1. To conduct needs assessment on education and training in liberated areas

2. To support education and research to create aware and well -educated youth (provide education fees) and to conduct field research and policy papers related to Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

3. To expand youth participation opportunities through training.

Volunteering and Internship

1. To expand the work with organizations beyond volunteering and to make paid internship accessible in management positions.

2. To promote the culture of volunteerism among youth and adolescents in affected areas.

3. To deal with Youth in a smart way free from exploitation. Organizations attracts people without sufficient experience and increase competition between VTs or control VTs.

Awareness and Spaces for Dialogues

1. To raise awareness via organizations projects and to work on general youth awareness raising.

2. To build a thorough awareness on issues of citizenship and community responsibility.

3. To provide community spaces for youth and youth centres.

4. To promote role models programs and intergenerational exchange programs.

Coordination and Policies

1. To launch a youth working group to ensure applying youth policy that grantees meaningful youth participation and effective response in order to create job opportunities for youth in various local and national bodies.

2. To establish a cluster that includes organizations working with youth and youth led teams to share capacities and learning lessons from various practices and to develop policies that foster youth participation and partnerships among all duty-takers.

3. To develop a volunteer charter that clarifies volunteers' rights and duties.

Economic and Employability

To address economic problems in order to increase youth job opportunities and to promote entrepreneurship potentials to better develop youth livelihood as it is one of the main triggers of violence.
To establish partnerships between organizations and the private sector to create job opportunities, in particular remote job opportunities.
To engage youth in the work of organizations and to increase their employability (20% quota)

Advocacy and Voices

To amplify youth voice internationally by developing public speaking skills and persuasion skills, in addition to focusing on advocacy and effective communication skills.
To allocate a share of the budget for training on blog writing and documenting success stories for organizations staff or VTs and provide platforms to discuss these stories.

Out of the Box Programming

To encourage using sports and art as creative tools of peacebuilding
To provide youth related programs, to support youth initiatives, and to increase support provided to VTs with more flexible fund-requirements and procedures.
Supporting social capital building through psycho-social support and youth resilience programs.
Incubating for VT and providing core establishment fund and consultancy for them.

Recommendations for youth and volunteer teams

Self-confidence, Collaboration and integration

To believe in personal skills and potentials and take the opportunity. " I can" youth should have high confidence and strong determination.
To renounce selfishness, avoid egoism and exclusion and reduce competition between teams and replace it by collaboration.
To seek self-learning and take parts in capacity buildings and develop tools and specific skills.
To have a unified vision of community work among teams by having periodical meetings and discussions.
Integration in teams' work and Integration in projects within each team

Success Stories

To shed light on stories of collective work and to spread collective work culture
To look through success stories from different contexts and to document teams and personal success stories.
Attending training that increase their ability to document and write blogs on such stories.

Freedom

VTs should utilize the freedom of work that they have to fill gaps that organizations are unable to fill due to donor's specific requirements.

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Annex 1

Youth, Peace and Security Agenda - Strengthening institutional capacity for implementation

Mandate:

- Analyze your organization's mandate through a youth lens to clarify how the YPS agenda can strengthen the work and efficiency of your organization.
- Incorporate YPS principles into the core work of the organization and ensure that the agenda is recognized as part of the organization's corporate priorities in documents such as work-plans, budget allocations and strategic plans .
- Find ways to ensure that a youth perspective is reflected in any conflict/situation analysis and strategic plans. This can be done both by engaging young people in the analytical process and by applying the youth lens throughout the analyses and planning processes .
- Ensure that relevant data is disaggregated by age and sex in all reports and documents, incorporating both a gender and a generational perspective to the analytical work of your organizations.
- Proactively include YPS specific updates into all reports, to assist building momentum and sensitize donors and partners to the relevance of the agenda for the implementation of your mandate.

Leadership:

- ways to consistently champion the YPS agenda during meetings, speeches and reports communicating the importance and relevance of the agenda to your work and the work of your organization.
- "Walk the talk" by creating opportunities for young people to collaborate with your organization. This include actively recruiting young professionals.
- Demonstrate interest and encourage staff to explore synergies between YPS and other agendas within your organization.
- Make sure you are a reliable ally and consistently try to push the implementation of the YPS agenda forward.

Operative Capacity:

- Ensure that YPS implementation is reflected in the organization's budget, with appropriate funding allocated to YPS programs and policies.
- Assign dedicated staff capacity mandated to support YPS implementation within your organization. This can be done through the recruitment of specialized capacity such as YPS specialists and advisors or the appointment of YPS focal points.
- Establish a network of YPS focal points and encourage coordination and collaboration within those peer-networks.
- Develop organization wide YPS strategies, guidelines and policy briefs.

Culture of learning:

- Encourage innovation and risk-taking to develop and test new approaches to the implementation of YPS.
- Proactively monitor, document, and evaluate YPS experiences, to identify lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up and replication.
- Promote learning exchanges and training opportunities for staff working or interested in YPS.
- Commission YPS-specific research and studies that can help gather more evidence and better inform programs and policies.

- Promote learning exchanges among partners and relevant stakeholders and encourage the establishment of a YPS community of practice.

Partnership:

- Seek ways to partner with and support like-minded actors that are trying to implement and advance the YPS agenda.
- Establish and/or join forces with multi-stakeholder YPS coalitions at different levels.
- Support existing youth-led initiatives and seek ways to meaningfully collaborate and partner with youth-led movements and organizations.

Ownership:

- Seek opportunities to "localize" the agenda within your organization and context, adapting the different aspects of the agenda to your reality.
- Engage and/or establish YPS coalitions and alliances with local and international partners, including youth-led organizations.
- Help national and local authorities to understand the relevance of the YPS agenda and strengthen their capacity to implement the agenda in country.
- Empower partners to own the agenda with you and to share the responsibility for its implementation.

Annex 2

Principles for Youth Participation

Principle 1: Learning and development.

Effective youth development organisations and programs provide learning and development opportunities for both their younger and older members. Emphasis is placed on a structured, lifelong learning approach that builds on existing strengths, capabilities and skills and recognises learning achievements. Leader training and the engagement of young people as participants in their own learning is viewed as essential for achieving quality outcomes. The pleasure of learning is enhanced by experiences and activities that recognise age and developmental phases, are safe, fun, meaningful and relate to real life.

Indicator 1

The provision of learning and development opportunities and the recognition of learning achievements is a high priority.

Activity under this indicator may include:

- A strategic commitment to lifelong learning and the fostering of an organisation wide, strength-based learning environment.
- Promoting formal and informal learning and development opportunities through training and recognition links with other organisations.
- Distributing information on accredited training opportunities, recognition options for prior, existing and future learning achievements and any available incentives.
- Supporting young people to educate staff about the things they hold personal expertise on such as technology, youth culture and issues that impact on them.
- Increasing the accessibility of training and development opportunities by using a mix of training delivery methods such as seminars, webinars, DVD's, and podcasts.

• Encouraging young people to decide how their learning and development achievements will be
celebrated and recognised.
• Nominating paid and volunteer staff and young people for organisational and non-organisational
awards such as state, national and international awards.
• Recognising branch achievements in supporting and mentoring program leaders and young people
to achieve learning and development outcomes.
• Helping program leaders build their knowledge about the recognition process, how it can help
deliver learning outcomes and how to apply it fairly to all young people.
• Exploring accreditation and formal recognition of training, programs and activities.
• Monitoring education research and literature to keep abreast of emerging developments in the
education field and using this information to improve both training and learning and development
activities.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• annual and operational plans, reports and minutes of meetings
• award manual, policies, recognition information sheets and celebration ceremonies
• education, training and development programs, plans, manuals and policy
• individual development plan, policy and skills assessments
• newsletters and information bulletins, posters and postcards
• recognition of prior learning policy and approach
• scholarship, bursary and small grants program
• training policy and budget
• youth reference group or forum.

Indicator 2

An individual learning and development planning system is in place that focuses on strengths and helps each person achieve their own learning and development goals.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Adopting an individual learning and development planning system that recognises and builds on existing strengths, skills and knowledge, addresses barriers that may affect future learning and development and leads to opportunities for further learning and development.
• Encouraging a learning culture where the focus is not on succeeding or failing but on learning as you go and where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for further learning and development.
• Building both formal and informal recognition options into the individual learning and development planning system to support the recognition and valuing of staff and volunteer knowledge and skills.
• Adopting a cycle of reflective self-assessment and peer review that all members are supported to take part in and where constructive, mutual and confidential feedback and coaching processes are encouraged.
• Providing training that equips paid and voluntary staff with an understanding and proficiency in individual learning and development planning methods.
• Integrating reflective practice into the learning and development methods.
• Designing and evaluating the individual learning and development planning system to help ensure it is implemented and experienced as a positive and constructive process and changes are made to improve it as and when they are needed.
• Building formal and informal celebration and recognition of learning and development achievements, no matter how small or large, into the individual learning and development planning system.

Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
- annual and business reports
- education, training policies, programs, manuals and documents
- evaluation, continuous improvement material and feedback sheets
- formal recognition and awards functions
- internet and paper based resources and information sheets
- membership forms and induction processes
- organisational web site and publicity material
- principles of learning
- recognition of prior learning processes and procedures
- reflection tools and materials
- skill assessments, individual development planning policy, material and approaches
- young people, paid and volunteer staff opinion, stories and reflections.

Indicator 3

The core values, skills and knowledge needed by program leaders are identified and provide the basis for recruitment, development and training.

Activity under this indicator may include:
- Identifying the core values, skills and knowledge needed by program leaders to work successfully with young people using a strengths based approach.
- Designing program leader recruitment material with reference to the values, skills and knowledge identified as essential for new program leaders.
- Using succession planning and individual development plans to identify emerging program leaders and offer targeted training opportunities to help them excel at what they do now and equip them with the skills they need to excel in the future.
- Offering accessible training to help program leaders develop, reflect on, update and maintain the values, skills and knowledge needed for successful youth development practice.
- Reviewing and revising, in partnership with youth practitioners, researchers, young people, families and program leaders, the content of program leader training to help ensure it remains relevant and reflects changes in youth development practice.
- Incorporating the identified program

leader competencies into individual learning and development plans to help program leaders recognise and value their existing knowledge and skills, manage their own learning, development and training and monitor their level of expertise in youth development practice.
- Equipping experienced paid and volunteer staff with the ability to identify program leader strengths, where these can be built on and where learning needs can be fostered while at the same time sustaining or increasing program leader confidence. Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
- evaluation process and feedback sheets
- group retention and growth plans
- individual development plans, policy, strategies and skills assessment processes
- induction training and mentor program
- minutes of meetings and newsletters
- organisational website material and resources
- paid, volunteer staff, trainer, young people and other service provider opinion
- program leader position skills assessment material and policy
- recognition of prior learning policy and approach
- recruitment materials and job and person specifications
- succession planning, policy and strategies
- training program and resources (including face-to-face lecture series, special seminars, online resources and discussion forums, webinars and DVD's).

Indicator 4

The organisation has a succession planning strategy that is integrated into its training and development structure.

Activity under this indicator may include:
- Implementing a succession planning approach that complies with recognised volunteer good practice for all roles within the organisation.
- Rotating roles and responsibilities to help build a broad knowledge and skill base across multiple roles within the organisation.
- Recognising and valuing the existing achievements and skills of staff and young people when assessing the potential for further development and providing opportunities for individuals to maximise their capacity to contribute.
- Implementing a leader development policy and approach to support the identification, recognition and training of potential younger and older leaders.
- Providing young people with opportunities to experience different roles across the organisation as a key part of the organisations succession planning strategy.
- Developing training content and materials to equip paid and volunteer staff with the skills and knowledge they need to apply succession planning strategies and identify opportunities for development.
- Supporting young people to develop a succession and development strategy for their young leaders and ensuring this strategy addresses recognition and engagement options into other roles for retiring young leaders.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
- business planning reports
- group retention and growth plans
- individual learning and development plans and skills assessments
- information sheets and support materials
- leadership planning materials
- mentor strategy, policy or plans
- organisational annual report, website, newsletters and reports
- organisational renewal strategy
- paid and voluntary staff and young

people's opinion, stories and reflections
- recognition of prior learning policy and approach.
- succession plan approach, policy, strategies and reports
- training and development programs and materials (including face-to-face lecture series, special seminars, online resources, webinars and DVD's)
- young leaders' development group policy, approach and strategy.

Indicator 5

A safe physical learning and activity environment is provided for participants.

Activity under this indicator may include:
- Developing, implementing and regularly reviewing a risk management strategy, policy and procedural framework including hazard identification, assessment, and management and reporting and procedures for each type or class of activity, situation or event.
- Providing program leaders, young people and their families with information about the organisations approach to safety so they can understand the importance of safety practices and safe behaviour and why it needs to be applied to any individual who enters the program facilities or operation area.
- Displaying posters and information about safe behaviour around activity sites to keep the information fresh in the minds of all participants.
- Training program leaders and young people to be effective role models in safe behaviours and to learn when it is safe to let go of an activity and not feel they have to control every aspect of it.
- Delivering activities on sites that have been subject to a hazard and risk assessment and after induction and/or training in safe practices relevant to the activity have been provided to those individuals who are taking part.
- Making training in first aid and safety procedures available to program leaders and young people and helping them to maintain their first aid certificate and knowledge.

• Providing young people and parents with explicit written information about an activity before it takes place by using informed consent forms, waivers or releases.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• child protection policy
• code of conduct
• individual development plan and skills assessments
• induction program and materials
• informed consent policy
• posters, information sheets and newsletters
• program manual, guidelines, activity outline and timetable
• program leader, young people, family opinion and knowledge
• risk management strategy, processes, practices and reports
• site risk assessment reports, guidelines for use for operational area and site signage
• training program, resources and manuals (including face-to-face lecture series, special seminars,
online resources, webinars and DVD's).

Indicator 6

Innovative, supportive and integrated approaches to learning and development are adopted using a combination of instruction, observation, experience and reflection.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Developing a core program structure that enables activities to be delivered using the combination of instruction, observation, experience and reflection.
• Bringing together program leaders to learn about and discuss new methods and approaches to learning and using this information to update existing and develop new program materials.
• Providing training and information resources to equip program leaders with the materials and skills they need to understand, recognise and respect the different ways that young people learn and develop.

• Supporting young people to feel confident about the approach to learning and development they are being taught to practice, asking them for feedback and acting on the information they share.
• Providing numerous opportunities for modelling, practising and reflecting on newly learnt skills.
• Keeping abreast of emerging research and methodologies in learning and teaching and using these to inform program practices.
• Working in partnership with young people to develop innovative approaches to learning and development that are suitable for use in the program environment.
• Encouraging young people to practice being effective role models, learning from others and respecting and valuing other people's skills, knowledge and experience even if it is different to their own.
• Supporting program leaders to practice their own and guide young people's reflective practice following activities and events to maximise learning outcomes.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• individual learning development plans
• information, activity sheets and modules
• media and publicity material
• program materials, philosophy, guidelines and operations manual
• program activity, structure and work sheets
• program leaders and young people's opinion, stories and reflections
• reflective practice materials and tools
• training and development policy, program and materials (including face-to-face, on-line resources,
webinar and DVD's).

Indicator 7

Activities are structured sequentially to build and maintain positive learning outcomes and to recognise increasing responsibility for self.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Offering a variety of structured and unstructured activities at each level of the program designed to sequentially build and maintain learning outcomes.
• Providing training for program leaders equipping them with the skills they need to assess the changing skill levels and capabilities of young people as they progress through the different stages of the program.
• Designing activities to have different components/roles to help program leaders consider what each member of the group does well and engage them in the group's activities in a way that is inclusive and builds on and stretches their existing skill level.
• Structuring activities sequentially to encourage young people to take increasing responsibility for self and to learn to value the benefits of taking ownership of their own participation.
• Teaching program leaders how to support rather than control young people's own discovery of their unique self as they negotiate their way through the program activities.
• Monitoring, supporting and encouraging each young person's progress.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• awards, recognition schemes, policy and events
• education policy
• individual learning development policy and plans
• organisational website and information
• participation monitoring sheets and data
• program materials, handbook, guidelines, structure, modules and activity sheets
• program leaders and young people's opinion
• publicity material
• training program, manuals, materials and policy (including face-to-face, distance training options,
on-line resources, webinars and DVD's).

Indicator 8

Program leaders can easily access mentoring, support and training.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Offering coaching and mentoring meetings with a more experienced paid or volunteer staff member.
• Setting up a dedicated support person or hotline.
• Supporting experienced program leaders to act as volunteer mentors or contact people for new program leaders.
• Developing a shadowing or internship scheme for new volunteers who are placed with effective long-term volunteers for a specified period of time before they have sole responsibility for a role or position.
• Using research and literature on good practice in volunteering to help build, update and monitor mentoring, support and training services for program leaders.
• Encouraging program leaders to actively make use of local, regional, national and international formal and informal networking opportunities with other youth development practitioners.
• Providing program leaders with accessible formal and informal training opportunities to equip them with the necessary skills to be successful in their role and to maintain their skills.
• Establishing a dedicated area on the organisational website for program leaders so they can easily access relevant information and resources to support them to excel in their role.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• individual development planning system
• induction program
• information materials, sheets and newsletters
• mentor program, support hotline and strategies
• new volunteer induction kit, support policies, procedures and strategies
• networking information, resources and events
• program leader opinion, stories and reflections
• succession planning strategy
• supervision policy and practices
• support hotline and on-line discussion forum
• training programs (including face-to-face, online resources, webinars, DVD's, lecture series and
special seminars)
• website material.

Indicator 9

Activities are fun, meaningful, relate to everyday life experiences, help to foster a world view and a positive vision for the future.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Incorporating a mix of fun, meaningful and purposeful elements into the design of activities that will appeal to a diversity of young people.
• Including content in program leader training on youth culture and adolescent and early adulthood development to help program leaders deliver an appropriate and engaging program of activities which relate to everyday life experiences and foster a positive vision for the future.
• Supporting young people to be involved in designing both the fun and the meaningful activities that are included in a programs calendar of activities.
• Supporting young people to understand and reflect on how the things they learn and do are related to their everyday life and the world they live in.
• Equipping program leaders with the skill to set realistic high expectations that positively challenge young people to extend themselves.

• Providing young people with the opportunity to try activities they may not otherwise have access to including activities outside their program leader's expertise by, for example, initiating joint activities and partnerships with other program groups.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• individual development plan policy and approach
• membership data
• mentor program
• paid and voluntary staff skills register
• partnership agreements with local community members and other youth development groups
• peer group meetings and discussions
• program activity outlines (aims and anticipated outcomes) and information sheets
• program activity evaluation reports
• program leaders and young people's opinion
• program material, structure, guidelines and manual
• reflection tools and discussion materials
• training policy, programs and materials (including face-to-face, online resources, webinars, DVD's, lecture series and special seminars)
• young member recruitment and retention data.

By engaging young people in formal and informal leadership roles and decision making processes effective youth development organisations and programs recognise young people's expertise and their role as active partners. They support young people's right to be involved, to be informed, to have their own opinion, to express their views and to be heard. They recognise that by taking up decision making and leadership opportunities young people become confident participants, develop important life skills, make a valuable contribution to the organisation, act as role models for other young people and help support organisations and programs to be responsive to their needs and aspirations.

Indicator 1

Organisational decision making and leadership development processes are shaped in partnership with young people.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Empowering young people to work in partnership with others to design the structures and processes that will be used to engage them in organisational decision making and leadership roles.
• Listening to what young people say about their involvement in decision making, the kinds of things they want to know about, how they would like to be kept informed, acting on this feedback and accepting that established rules, procedures and ways of doing things may need to change.
• Including a commitment in the organisations strategic and policy framework to young people as active leaders and decision makers in the organisation.
• Changing existing structures and processes especially if they are shown to exclude young people or groups of young people with particular life experiences.
• Holding discussions on leadership and decision making to support the context, processes, roles and responsibilities of leadership and decision making to be shaped, owned and understood by everyone – young and old.

• Monitoring research and literature on leadership and decision making and disseminating key trends and ideas to stakeholders.
• Collaborating with young people, including those who have chosen not to participate, to reflect on, document and publicise what has worked, what has not worked so well and using this information to shape leadership and decision making. Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• annual, business and strategic plans and reports
• capacity building, organisational review and culture survey results
• decision making processes, structures and reports
• evaluation policy, approaches, processes and reports
• information sheets and newsletters
• mentor program and policy
• organisational website, online and discussion forum
• paid and voluntary staff and young people's opinion, stories and reflections
• program record, activity logs and books
• young leader recruitment materials, induction training, strategies and policy
• young members reference group, youth forum or council.

Indicator 2

Young people are supported to be active leaders in the organization.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Adopting an active leadership education program including opportunities for young people to shadow current young and older leaders and to access targeted information about leadership (such as what it is, how it operates within the organisation, how they can be involved and the personal resource costs involved).
• Publicly promoting a broad range of short and longer term internal and external leadership opportunities for young people.
• Acknowledging the achievements of current and emerging young leaders.
• Incorporating content in paid and voluntary staff training to help them successfully work with and support a diverse range of young people in leadership roles.

• Providing opportunities for young people to give confidential feedback on their leadership experiences, the opportunities made available to them, support provided and using this information for continuous improvement purposes.
• Equipping young leaders with knowledge and skills across a broad portfolio as part of the organisations succession planning.
• Developing a youth advisory council/ youth forum to provide diverse young people with opportunities to build leadership skills in a peer supported environment.
• Offering young people a range of support strategies to help them confidently deal with peer group or community pressure relating to their involvement in organisational leadership roles.
• Providing young people with a dedicated support person, coaching and mentors to help them fulfil any organisational leadership roles they may take on.
• Rotating young people through different roles such as chair and minutes secretary to build their experience of the multiple roles within an organisation.
• Supporting diverse young people to gain experience in leadership by providing training, resources
and opportunities taking into account impact factors such as different abilities, cultural identity, socio-economic status and geographic location.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• annual and business reports
• committee guidelines, structure and policy
• election, appointment and selection material
• evaluation, feedback sheets, entry and exit surveys
• individual development plan and skills assessment processes
• leadership development policy, approach, program and recruitment materials
• mentor policy, approach and 'buddy' program
• organisational website, online and discussion forum
• paid and voluntary staff, finance officer, new and aspiring young leader opinion
• publicity newsletters, materials, leaflets and posters
• reimbursement policy, position stipend, training bursary and fund.
• young members reference group, youth advisory council and youth forum.

Indicator 3

The participation of young people in organisational decision making is active, purposeful, valued and respected.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Working in partnership with a range of young people to develop a written organisational statement of commitment to active and meaningful youth participation in decision making.
• Developing an organisational culture where young people's opinion is respected and valued. They are not embarrassed or dismissed when they do not know things, have trouble expressing themselves, make mistakes or choose not to take part.
• Providing young people with multiple and varied opportunities, including via social media and other online mechanisms, to actively take part in decision making and giving them enough space and information to form their own opinions.
• Providing paid and voluntary staff members with training and information to help them successfully share decision making processes with diverse young people and to support youth led decision making on issues particularly relevant to young people.
• Encouraging all young people to express their opinion, not just those who are confident and/or high achievers and using a mix of different approaches to encourage this participation and constructively deal with conflict.
• Planning ahead to engage young people from a range of backgrounds in decision making by addressing the financial and people resources that may be needed and allocating sufficient time to enable them to take part.
• Involving young people in a wide range of decision making processes and publicly talking about how and why their ideas and opinions are valued. This may include showcasing and celebrating examples of how young people's ideas, opinions and innovations have influenced the direction of organisational decision-making.
• Keeping young people informed about the decision making processes they have taken part in, including information about ideas that have or have not been adopted and why and providing constructive opportunities for young people to question and appeal decisions.

Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• access and equity strategy, discussion reports and papers
• annual report and business plans, policies, processes and structures
• evaluation policy, approaches and reports
• internal and external publicity material and youth newsletters
• mentor program
• minutes of meetings and outcome reports
• social media and website information
• paid and voluntary staff and young people's opinion, stories and reflections
• program induction, information and manual
• training programs, content, manuals and materials (on-line, face-to-face, webinars, DVD's, discussion and training forums)
• young members reference group or youth forum.

Indicator 4

Young people are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation.

Activity under this indicator may include:
• Creating informal and formal leadership opportunities at the program and activity level to enable diverse young people try out and develop leadership skills.
• Developing training and information resources for program leaders to help them keep an open mind about each young person's leadership potential and to cultivate a supportive program environment where young people feel able to try out leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation.
• Providing young people with support strategies to help them deal with peer group or other group pressure about their involvement in program leadership activities.

• Using age appropriate learning and development methods to teach young people about and provide them with opportunities to practice the skills that effective leaders need to develop such as constructive communication skills (listening, reflecting, putting their point of view forward, negotiating multiple points of view and conflict resolution and mediation skills).
• Supporting a range of youth, adult and intergenerational led activities.
• Using succession planning to provide real opportunities for young people to move into leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation.
• Designing activities to provide opportunities for young people to rotate through, try out and experience different leadership roles and responsibilities.
• Encouraging young people to model leadership behaviours for other young people such as older age groups leading activities for younger age groups.
• Celebrating and acknowledging the achievements and goals of young people as they take on leadership roles in program and activity planning, delivery and evaluation.
Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:
• annual report
• examples of special activities
• formal young leader, career structure and sequential advancement policy
• induction training
• mentor or 'buddy' program
• paid and voluntary staff support program
• peer group pressure education materials and strategies
• program guidelines, handbook, policies, structure, data and activity sheets
• program leader role descriptions
• skills assessments and individual development plans
• social media and on-line forums
• training program, manuals, plans and information sheets
• young people and program leader's opinion.

Indicator 5

Program and activity decision making actively involves young people.

Activity under this indicator may include:

• Encouraging young people to provide regular feedback on what they think about program activities and using this information to help ensure activities continue to meet their needs and appeal to them.

• Developing training and information resources for program leaders so they can confidently model constructive decision making skills for young people.

• Providing accessible information to young people so they understand how, why and when activities are shaped the way they are and scheduled for particular times and places and how, why and when they can influence the activities they take part in.

• Supporting the development of increasingly sophisticated, age-appropriate strategies for conflict resolution and decision making.

• Making opportunities for young people to plan and run special events and joint activities within their own organisation and across other youth and community organisations.

• Listening to, respecting and acting on young people's opinions and ideas and if they cannot be acted on being open to questions and appeals through an active and collaborative learning decision making process.

• Providing training and program materials for program leaders so they can confidently hand over responsibility to young people for discussing, developing and adopting their own code of conduct, group norms, rules and/or guidelines for behaviour.

• Equipping program leaders with the skills to support them to encourage young people, regardless of their background, knowledge or skill level, to actively participate in decision making processes.

Activity under this indicator may be found or promoted in:

• evaluation processes, feedback mechanisms and focus groups

• young leader career structure and sequential advancement policy

• group contract and code of conduct

• individual learning and development plans

• program guidelines, operations manual, handbook and policies

• program activity sheet, planning materials and timetable

• program leaders and young people's opinion, stories and reflections

• risk management strategy and practices

• social media and website information

• training program and resources (including face-to-face lecture series, special seminars, online resources, webinars and DVD's)

• youth forum and youth reference group.

Annex 3
Research Tools

FGDs question for voluntary youth teams: Youth Defenetion.

- How do you define youth group?
- When you think about youth empowerment, How do you describe the situation of youth rightnow, and what is the image you aim to reach in the future?
- What are the main values that really matter for youth?
- Who are the main idoles for youth, what make them idoles for the youth?
- What are the things if we provide can empower youth more?
- What are the main concerns/fears for youth?
- What the main motivations for youth to have meaningful participation?
- What are the main rights for youth? What is the source for these rights?

FGDs question for voluntary youth teams: Youth meaningful participation.

- When you think of youth participation in community work, or peace building, How do you define meaningful participation or effective participation?
- Do you think youth are aware of their roles? What are those roles? What are the roles related to peace building process and keeping security?
- When we look at participation diagram (levels) what is the level of participation that youth are practicing from your point of view?
- When we look at the project development cycle, in which phase do you think youth are involved/consulted/participated?
- In which sectors youth are mostly consulted?
- What are the main challenges/ concerns/ fears that limit the meaningful participation of youth in community work and peace building process?
- What does it take, what is needed to highlight the meaningful participation and initiatives of youth?

FGDs question for voluntary youth teams: Youth Empowerment.

•When you think of youth empowerment, When do you concider youth are being empowered?

•What should be provided to empower youth to have meaningful participation?
- **a.** Skills
- **b.** İnistituations
- **c.** Programs
- **d.** Policies and legestlations

•Have you ever heard of UNSCR 2250? Which pilar is contipute to youth empowerment the most?

•What are your recomendation to implement 2250?

Interview, NGOs working with youth.

•How do you define youth group?

•When you think about youth empowerment, How do you describe the situation of youth rightnow, and what is the image you aim to reach in the future?

•Do you think youth are aware of their roles? What are those roles? What are the roles related to peace building process and keeping security?

•What does it take, what is needed to highlight the meaningful participation and initiatives of youth?

•When we look at the project development cycle, in which phase do you think youth are involved/consulted/participated?

•When you think of youth empowerment, When do you concider youth are being empowered?

•What should be provided to empower youth to have meaningful participation?
- **a.** Skills
- **b.** İnistituations
- **c.** Programs
- **d.** Policies and legestlations

•Have you ever heard of UNSCR 2250? Which pilar is contipute to youth empowerment the most?

•What are your recomendation to implement 2250?

How much are you applying those? 1 not at all – 5 fully applying

Mandate:

•Analyze your organization's mandate through a youth lens to clarify how the YPS agenda can strengthen the work and efficiency of your organization.

• Incorporate YPS principles into the core work of the organization and ensure that the agenda is recognized as part of the organization's corporate priorities in documents such as work-plans, budget allocations and strategic plans .

•Find ways to ensure that a youth perspective is reflected in any conflict/situation analysis and strategic plans. This can be done both by engaging young people in the analytical process and by applying the youth lens throughout the analyses and planning processes .

•Ensure that relevant data is disaggregated by age and sex in all reports and documents, incorporating both a gender and a generational perspective to the analytical work of your organizations.

•Proactively include YPS specific updates into all reports, to assist building momentum and sensitize donors and partners to the relevance of the agenda for the implementation of your mandate.

Leadership:

•ways to consistently champion the YPS agenda during meetings, speeches and reports communicating the importance and relevance of the agenda to your work and the work of your organization.

•"Walk the talk" by creating opportunities for young people to collaborate with your organization. This include actively recruiting young professionals.

•Demonstrate interest and encourage staff to explore synergies between YPS and other agendas within your organization.

•Make sure you are a reliable ally and consistently try to push the implementation of the YPS agenda forward.

Operative Capacity:

- Ensure that YPS implementation is reflected in the organization's budget, with appropriate funding allocated to YPS programs and policies.
- Assign dedicated staff capacity mandated to support YPS implementation within your organization. This can be done through the recruitment of specialized capacity such as YPS specialists and advisors or the appointment of YPS focal points.
- Establish a network of YPS focal points and encourage coordination and collaboration within those peer-networks.
- Develop organization wide YPS strategies, guidelines and policy briefs.

Culture of learning:

- Encourage innovation and risk-taking to develop and test new approaches to the implementation of YPS.
- Proactively monitor, document, and evaluate YPS experiences, to identify lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up and replication.
- Promote learning exchanges and training opportunities for staff working or interested in YPS.
- Commission YPS-specific research and studies that can help gather more evidence and better inform programs and policies.
- Promote learning exchanges among partners and relevant stakeholders and encourage the establishment of a YPS community of practice.

Partnership:

- Seek ways to partner with and support like-minded actors that are trying to implement and advance the YPS agenda.
- Establish and/or join forces with multi-stakeholder YPS coalitions at different levels.
- Support existing youth-led initiatives and seek ways to meaningfully collaborate and partner with youth-led movements and organizations.

Ownership:

- Seek opportunities to "localize" the agenda within your organization and context, adapting the different aspects of the agenda to your reality.
- Engage and/or establish YPS coalitions and alliances with local and international partners, including youth-led organizations.
- Help national and local authorities to understand the relevance of the YPS agenda and strengthen their capacity to implement the agenda in country.
- Empower partners to own the agenda with you and to share the responsibility for its implementation.

Interview, success stories of youth.

- How do you define youth group?
- When you think about youth empowerment, How do you describe the situation of youth rightnow, and what is the image you aim to reach in the future?
- Who is you idoles that motivate you to act? What are the values and principles that make you consider them your idoles?
- What are the main youth rigjts?
- Do you consider yourself have done meaningful participation?
- What are the reasons that make you consider that your participation was meaningful and effective?
- What were the motivations/ drivers for this meaningful participation?
- What are the concerns/ fears/ challenges that limit your meaningful participation?
- What are the roles that youth have to do related to peace building process and keeping security?
- What are the things that empowerd you to face the challenges?
- What should be provided to empower youth to have meaningful participation?
    - **a.** Skills
    - **b.** İnistituations
    - **c.** Programs
    - **d.** Policies and legestlations
- What are your main roles related to empoweing others?

NOTES