Debating Peace and Justice Across Generations

A Participatory Youth Action Research in Northwest Syria

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Executive Summary

This research, developed and carried out by Door Beyond War between July and November 2024, was designed to explore generational differences in how people perceive and value peace, justice and rights in Northwest Syria. 12 young male and female researchers were trained in different participatory action research methods, including a global café, interactive theatre and focus group discussions. They conducted research in pairs in six different locations (Killi, Salqin, Darkush, Maret Misrin and Azaz).

Participants were divided into three generational groups (43–30 ,29–18, and 44 and older). Research activities encouraged each group to explore their own priorities and how far they might be willing to compromise these for the sake of peace as well as their perceptions of the rights held by other generations. Exercises uncovered the sources of power in society and the different roles held, exploring generational dynamics through role-playing activities. Finally, a force field analysis asked participants to indicate their position between a preference for peace or justice.

Key Findings from the exercises

In the global café, there was broad agreement that education was a top priority for the youngest generation, work the highest priority for the middle generation, and health the primary concern for the older generation. Interestingly, the middle generation did not see health as a priority, while the youngest and oldest generations showed greater empathy for each other and a mutual concern with each other's health and well-being. Some tension emerged between the middle and oldest generations with some middle-generation participants suggesting that the older generation should retire from the workforce and focus on dignity in later life, while the younger group felt that older people should still have the right to work.

The older generation prioritised work, marriage, and essential needs such as housing and food over freedom of expression. This was largely due to their own experience of the cultural and economic pressures to support family members in marriage. Interestingly the youngest generation did not mention the right to travel, which they felt was due to a high level of belonging. However, more detailed analysis suggests it may also be due to the recent stability in Northwest Syria, with fewer military activities and more accessible local opportunities as well as the risks and costs of travel.
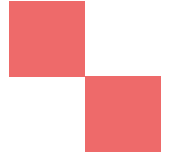
Participants were also invited to reflect on the exercises, and many commented how learning about the rights and needs of other generations deepened their understanding and fostered a newfound respect for each other's rights. One participant mentioned that their initial ideas were simple, but intergenerational input had broadened their perspective. Another noted a deeper understanding of the rights and needs across generations, with each generation having unique qualities.

In the role-playing exercise, topics such as NGO leaders and young employees, activists of different ages, parents, and children surfaced. Through freezing the activity and allowing others to take over roles participants were able to look at the power imbalances in society and how to address these through challenging the more powerful and encouraging change. This showed a preference for a peaceful approach that sought to empower the community rather than reinforce hierarchies, highlighting how authority and traditional customs currently restrict youth empowerment and hinder creativity.

Discussions on generational roles and sources of power showed that the youngest generations respect older generations as mentors and leaders. The middle generation views itself as a bridge, combining youthful energy with older wisdom. Participants recognized the creativity and contributions of the youngest generation, and felt they should also be included in any future society building.

In the debate on peace versus justice, participants across generations felt both were important, but older generations tended to prioritise peace, while younger generations leaned toward justice. Many struggled to accept the notion of peace, associating it with reconciliation with the regime and some preferred the term "coexistence" to avoid this association. Social status also influenced participant's views: with those from host communities supporting stability and peace, while those who had been displaced prioritised justice. Some participants refrained from the debate, and most were reluctant to be influenced by others, finding it difficult to change their perspective. Those willing to compromise personal rights for collective peace or decision-making cited regional and international pressures to do this.

Implications of this Research

The different generations involved in this study have had significantly different life experiences which have impacted their views of the ongoing conflict, and the compromises they may or may not be willing to make for the sake of peace. Syrian youth aged between 18 and 29 have spent more than half their lives in war. They have experienced war more extensively than they have experienced peace, and are often seen as drivers of conflict, or at best, as resources to be built upon rather than rights-holders who possess the agency to confront and mitigate violence. While they did not participate directly in military operations or non-violent movements they have been significantly affected by the war, experiencing bombing, displacement and disruption to their education. The older generation (those over 44), were 30 years old or more in 2011 and included those leading opposition groups engaged in the political and negotiation process. The middle generation (43-32) included university students and young people who were aged between 18 and 29 in 2011 and many who sacrificed their work and studies to join the nonviolence movement and have since accumulated years of grievances.

Bringing these three groups together to explore each other's experiences and views of a settlement surfaced some of these different views but also increased and built upon levels of understanding between them. By training groups of young people to lead the research a level of collaboration also developed between those from different areas, and a sense of their own ability to make a difference, as well as an appreciation of what older people might offer them in terms of wisdom and experience. It showed the willingness and enthusiasm of young people to work together for a more socially cohesive society, despite the difficulties of achieving a formal peace agreement.

This study served as a pilot and has shown the potential of this research. In the rapidly changing political situation Door Beyond War would now like to roll this out to other areas of the country, supporting young people to take a positive role in their own communities and reinforcing other shared identities beyond long standing regional or political divisions.

Introduction

In discussing the role of youth in peacebuilding, this research adopts the view that youth are rights-holders, not merely beneficiaries of older generations' projects. It explores the understanding of rights and advocacy for rights among the different groups and rights and rights advocacy as a means of peacebuilding among youth aged between 18 to 29 in Northwest Syria. However, it will also discuss the assumption that awareness of rights contributes to youth's inclination towards peace, bearing in mind that such awareness could also drive youth to defend these rights against de facto authorities, potentially leading to renewed cycles of violence.

Any debate on youth as rights holders in relation "peace" and "justice," needs to take into account the experiential gap and the power dynamics between different generations. There are various forms of power at play: the visible power of decision-making among older generations, the hidden power and agendas of different generations, and the invisible power as a result of the distinct forms of grievances of these different generations. In a context such as Syria's, generational contradictions exist at both the local and national levels and are influenced by the involvement of outside parties at an international level. Older generations are generally more open to an international or imposed liberal peace process while youth are assumed to hold an amount of power at local level in their ability to organise for collective action and resistance. This enables local leaders to justify repressive policies towards youth whose politics threaten their interests. Governments define non-violent protesters as 'thugs' or 'terrorists' showing 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 people's knowledge that doesn't suit their interests and mirrors their own views. Within academic research and policy development circles narratives about, for example, 'youth crises' or 'harnessing youth as an asset' are both equally unhelpful. While these labels command attention and justify the inclusion of youth on the policy agenda, they reproduce the logic of the military recruiters, in seeing youth as a means to an end.

Syrian youth, aged 18 to 29, have spent most of their lives in a country at war. They have experienced conflict far more than peace. This prolonged exposure to violence has shaped societal views, often seeing them either as troublemakers or as resources to be utilized, rather than recognizing them as individuals with rights and the potential to drive positive change. The generational gap has exacerbated this, with older individuals dominating political and civic spaces, while younger people struggle to find their place and voice. Many youths have lost faith in the idea that their voices can be heard. Consequently, they are disengaged and doubt the meaning of participation, feeling that their views will not contribute to any meaningful change.

This research seeks to bridge the gap in understanding the role of youth in peacebuilding by exploring their awareness of rights and their capacity to advocate for them. Its central premise is that if young people understand their own rights and those of other generations, they can collaborate as rights-holders to create lasting peace and defend these rights. The study will examine whether learning about the rights, power sources, and roles across generations can help youth play active roles in peacebuilding and how understanding their rights will impact relationships within society..
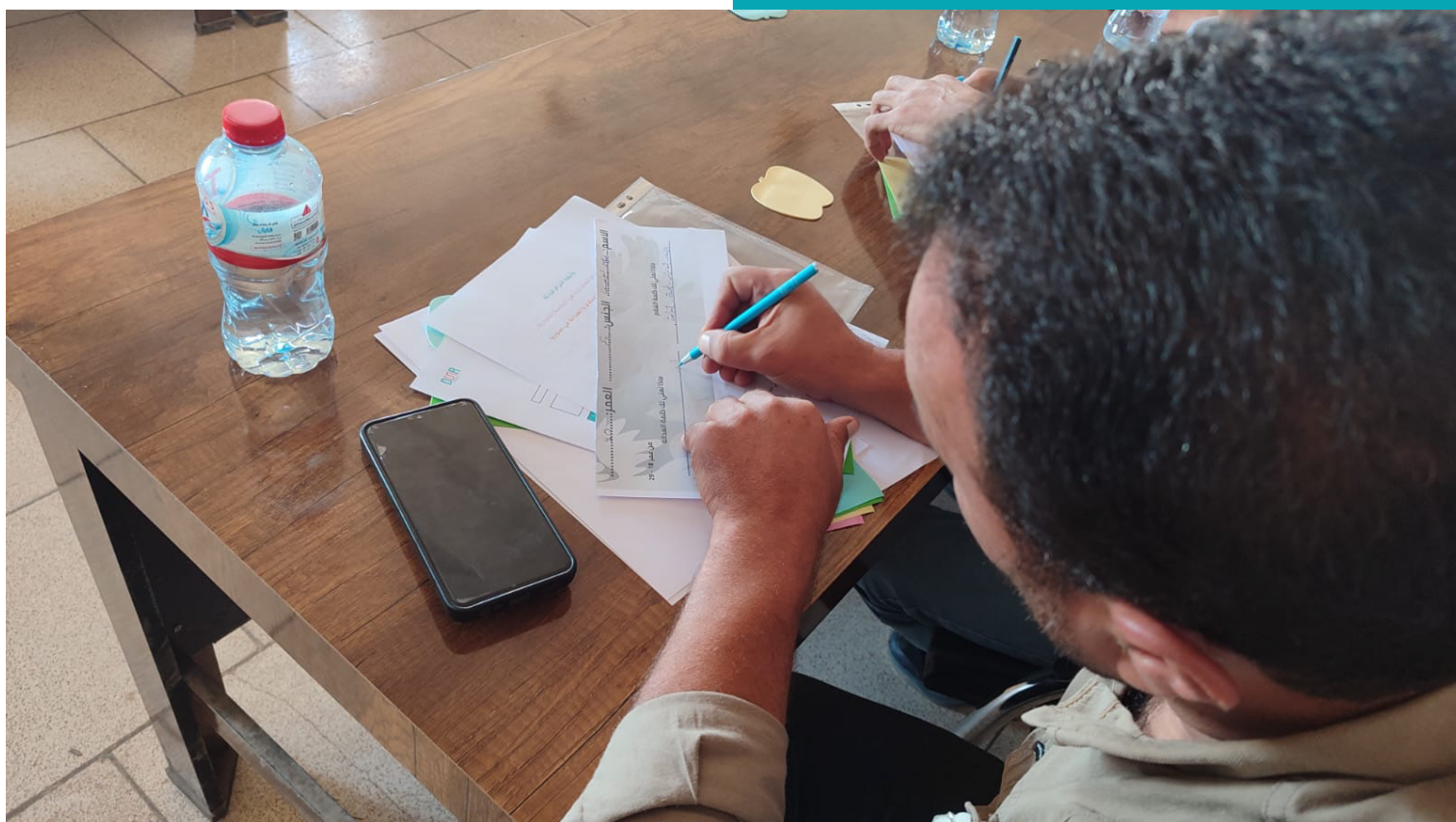
Research
Approach

The Research Objectives were:

To facilitate communication and collaboration among 3 generations in Northwest Syria.

To understand the power dynamics in different generations and how they affect youth rights and peacebuilding efforts.

To assess the risks and support mechanisms that influence youth willingness to defend their rights.

It was designed to answer the following Main Question:

How does an awareness of rights, roles and power among different generations of Syrian contribute to local peacebuilding efforts?

Sub-Questions:
1. Is it possible to build a shared understanding of youth rights and needs to transform conflict?
2. What are the priorities regarding youth rights from the perspective of the youth themselves?
3. What are the risks and support mechanisms that influence young people's willingness to defend their rights?
4. How can power dynamics among different generations inform and influence the "peace" vs. "rights" debate?

It was conducted as a pilot in Northwest Syria (NWS) by 12 young researchers (6 males and 6 females) from Door Beyond War's Young Voices project between July and November 2024. Using a participatory approach, the process began with discussions about the main research question and problem statement, followed by a one-day training workshop on research tools, including the World Café method and Theater of the Oppressed. Subsequently, two online training sessions were held: the first focusing on the intergenerational dialogue tool, and the second on skills of note taking, documenting and transcribing sessions.

The research itself involved two separate workshops with participants each held in five different locations conducted by two young researchers, (one male and one female). These were Killi, Maaret Misrin, Salqeen, Darkush and Azaz (although Azaz did not host a second debate session).

The Workshops covered:

1 The first workshop: The World Cafe, Role play and interactive theatre

2 The second workshop: field force and debate on justice and peace

In addition to Presentation of findings and round table discussion with different actors after the end of the analysis.

A total of 89 participants were recruited from the three different generational groups with 6–4 participants per age group in each session. Care was taken to ensure there was also diversity in gender and backgrounds to include both host community members and internally displaced persons. All participants signed participant information sheets and consent forms before engaging in the workshops which clarified areas for discussion and their freedom to withdraw at any point should they so wish. After the first workshop, the researchers attended a reflection and training session to prepare for the second workshop, which focused on debates surrounding justice and peace and included the same participants in the same five locations. Following the second workshop, another online session was held with the researchers to discuss and interpret their findings based on observations during the sessions. A final summary of the research was shared with all researchers.

The research findings were also presented to various stakeholders, including local NGOs and donors, during a presentation and roundtable discussion. This event engaged actors interested in youth, rights, and peace-related programs and research.

Research
Methodology

This research followed specific definitions for key terms such as "generation," "rights," and "peace." "Generation" is defined based on two sources: UNSCR 2250, which identifies youth as those aged 18 to 29, and the intergenerational dialogue toolkit developed by FBA, which defines a generation not only as an age group but as a group of people who experience similar circumstances. For this research, we define three distinct age groups:

Ages 29-18

This group includes individuals who were children under 15 years old when the Syrian revolution began and have since experienced more war than peace.

Ages 30-43

These individuals were young (16 to 29 years old) at the start of the revolution, often facing disruptions to their studies or careers.

Ages +44

This group consists of those who were over 30 when the revolution began and are now 44 or older; many in this group took the initiative to establish NGOs or become involved in political processes.

The research focused on civic rights rather than human rights to better understand rights from the participants' local perspectives and to identify the most urgent rights and needs within the Syrian and local context. By adopting this civic-focused approach, the study aimed to capture how these rights could realistically be pursued given current local conditions.

In terms of peace, the research examined it at a local, intergenerational level, with discussions touching on aspects of the Syrian conflict. However, it avoided adopting a liberal definition of peace, which is typically more applicable in a post-conflict or cross-regional context. This approach allowed for a more grounded discussion tailored to the immediate realities of the participants' environment.

All phases were developed in a participatory manner with all the participants. The research utilized different tools such as one-to-one meetings, focus and discussion groups, role-playing, and BOAL (theater of the oppressed). The research also applied a qualitative analysis that engaged youth in all phases and documented their reflections.

The methodology was built on Door Beyond War's extensive field experience with youth in Syria, focusing on their empowerment and capacity-building. The process was structured into five interconnected phases, each involving training, implementation, and reflection to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation of tools as needed.

Phase 1: Initial Training and Ongoing Evaluation

The research began with an intensive two-day training session, introducing participants to the core concepts of the research and equipping them with research tools. Training continued in subsequent phases, with periodic meetings held after each phase to evaluate progress to provide additional training on new tools, and engage in discussions with participants. This phase included some reading for the researchers about intergenerational dialogue, peace and rights.

Phase 2: World Café and Exploration of Age Groups (workshop 1)

In this phase, the "World Café" technique was used to facilitate deep interactions around the concept of rights across different age groups. Real photos of individuals representing three age categories were displayed: (43-30 ,29-18, and over 44), with each age group represented by a male and female. Participants were asked to identify the rights of each age group. Later, a World Café session was held to gather the perspectives of each generation regarding the rights of others.

Phase 3: Role-Playing and Intergenerational Interaction (workshop 1)

This phase primarily relied on role-playing to deepen the understanding of rights and intergenerational dynamics. A preliminary discussion session was held to explore the roles and sources of power of each generation. Participants then engaged in role-playing based on interactions they felt represented the most significant intergenerational dynamics. During the performance, other groups were allowed to freeze a role and replace it with what they considered a more appropriate response from another generation's perspective.

Phase 4: Power Field and Debates on Justice and Peace (workshop 2)

In this phase, the "Power Field" tool was used to examine participants' positions on justice and peace. A debate was organized based on their stances, followed by a role reversal exercise. Afterward, participants were asked to reflect on what points they found easier to compromise on after the role swap, which could indicate concessions made for peace. They were also asked about the issues that they found harder to compromise on, reflecting a stronger commitment to accountability, rights, and justice.

Phase 5: Ongoing Evaluation and Learning from Experience

After every tool was used, periodic evaluation sessions were conducted to gather feedback from participants and assess challenges faced during the implementation. The youth researchers were actively involved in all phases, contributing practical insights and reflecting on their experiences. These reflections were essential in refining the research process and ensuring that the methodology remained relevant and effective.

Limitations
of the Research

The research was carried out with young, relatively inexperienced researchers with limited training and employed techniques unfamiliar to a Syrian audience. However, the team anticipated several challenges and risks and devised a comprehensive plan to mitigate them if they occurred. These risks included the fear of the younger generation to defend their rights and participate in the activities, as well as the possibility that the older generation might refuse to engage in role-playing exercises. To address these concerns, the researchers were trained in modeling techniques to encourage active participation from all generations. Additionally, community or ground rules were established to ensure a safe and respectful environment for communication, fostering courage and mutual respect among participants.

The researchers also identified specific challenges related to each tool used in the research and created contingency plans (Plan B). For example, if participants in the "Power Field" exercise all ended up in the same position, the team had strategies in place to address this imbalance. In such cases, they were prepared to engage participants in discussions on the reasons behind their positions and how this represented power dynamics. For the debate exercise, the researchers had prepared cards with the words "justice" or "peace" written on them, which were randomly distributed among participants to ensure a balanced and dynamic discussion.

These proactive measures ensured that the research environment remained flexible and responsive, allowing the team to handle any challenges while keeping the process inclusive and constructive for all participants.

Research Analysis

A descriptive analytical method was used to process participants' responses in relation to their perception of rights, the needs underlying these rights, the abilities and contributions of each generation and the roles each generation plays. It also assessed the degree of agreement or prioritisation between peace and rights. Terms emerging in the world cafe exercise were written on post-its on and grouped into key themes on flip chart sheets around the room, outlining the expectations of rights for the different generations. These were photographed and recorded by researchers who also held an analysis session during which they discussed participants' observations and exchanged ideas about the methods to be used in the analysis. They worked collaboratively to rate and prioritise themes based on how frequently they were mentioned. Participants then discussed the source of power and the roles for their generation and each of the other generations based on the discussion they had had.

Participants then selected one of these roles to play out in an exercise based on Boal's 'Theater of the Oppressed' in which a small group 'play out' a scenario in front of an audience, who are able to 'freeze' the scene at any point and take over one of the roles. This focuses participants on how a particular scenario might play out and the best way of resolving a difference. Researchers used an interpretive approach to analyse these exercises, noting down how participants from each generation interacted, the major issues that emerged in the different scenes and the emotions and tensions accompanying these. There were similarities in the themes arising in these sessions, which included family relationships or relationships in the workplace or university. In general, the prevailing trend across all regions was to replace the power element in the play with positive change, influencing the more powerful person to change rather than empowering the weaker element.

The second workshop, which hosted a debate session, highlighted major differences between regions on peace versus justice. Participants were asked to choose between peace or justice and describe it in one word then asked to demonstrate their position on the field force continuum with peace on one side and justice on the other. Researchers were asked to note down the positions. Participants then prepared for a debate about peace and justice, with researchers recording the judgments used to support their case. Participants were then asked to return to the force field and restate their position, researchers asked noting how many had shifted, where it was easy for people to compromise between the two and whether it was possible to have balance between peace and justice. A descriptive analysis of positions showed that these were largely influenced by people's backgrounds; in the Salqin session, most participants tended to favour justice because the majority were displaced. In contrast, in Darkoush, participants favoured peace because the majority were from the host community. However, justice was the most favoured option overall among participants across generations and regions.
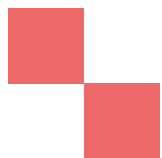
Research Findings

1 The World Cafe (workshop 1)

A table identifying responses from each of the three generations regarding their own and each other's rights, and needs underlying these rights is included below (figure). Results are also disaggregated by gender.

The table next page indicates the number of times the different terms were mentioned by each age group and the percentage of those who raised this term. Participants were invited to identify all those areas they felt they were reasonably entitled to, (and many identified more than one) for their own generation and for those of other age groups.

this Table showing the perspectives of all generations in relation to their own rights and those of other generations as expressed during the world cafe board.

This is further illustrated in the graphs included in Annex 2, which showed areas of agreement and disagreement between the rights of different age groups.

Terms	Age groups	18-29	30-43	44+
rights to work	18-29	**%20.5**	%38.5	%5.1
	30-43	%26.1	**%52.2**	%13.0
%89.77	44+	%34.6	%50.0	**%42.3**
Education	18-29	**%64.1**	%5.13	%0.0
	30-43	%60.9	%17.4	%0.0
%71.59	44+	%65.4	%3.8	%0.0
Freedoms and participations	18-29	**%23.1**	%23.1	%5.1
	30-43	%21.7	**%30.4**	%34.8
%61.36	44+	%11.5	%15.4	%26.9
live safety/peace stability	18-29	%7.7	%15.4	%17.9
	30-43	%8.7	%13.0	%30.4
%43.18	44+	%11.5	%7.7	%19.2
Marriage	18-29	%5.1	%20.5	%5.1
	30-43	%8.7	**%21.7**	%0.0
%38.64	44+	%15.4	%38.5	%3.8
live with dignity respect/recognition	18-29	%0.0	%7.7	%25.6
	30-43	%0.0	%4.3	%30.4
%35.23	44+	%3.8	%3.8	**%30.8**
health care/social insurance, financial support	18-29	%0.0	%0.0	%28.2
	30-43	%4.3	%0.0	%8.7
%30.68	44+	%0.0	%0.0	**%50.0**

Indicative Comments from Participants.

"Participating in this activity led us to respect the rights of other generations."

"Becoming aware of the rights and needs of other generations and sharing opinions on them strengthened our understanding of rights and needs."

"The speaker, aged 31, mentioned that regarding rights and needs, we may find many misconceptions because we have been living in an unstable environment for 14 years. Rights and needs require a safe environment to be fully realized."

"The speaker, aged 22, mentioned that the ideas we initially wrote down were somewhat simple, but other generations expanded on them and improved them, making them better than before. Another participant from the same generation noted that they pointed out additional aspects that broadened our understanding."

"The speaker, aged 22, also mentioned that by reviewing everyone's perspectives, their initial thoughts about the third generation changed. They found that this generation has good ideas and different opinions, which gave us insight into the rights and needs of other generations."

"The speaker, aged 33, said that during the exercise, after learning about the rights of other generations, it became clear that we live in a society deprived of its rights. These rights are fundamental in stable countries, yet, unfortunately, we lack them."

"Becoming aware of the rights and needs of other generations and sharing opinions on them strengthened our understanding of rights and needs."
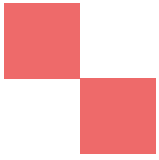
Reflections from Researchers

After completing the analysis, a discussion session was held with the researchers to explore some of the findings and understand how they interpret the results based on their observations during the sessions they moderated. The researchers noted that the right to return was not explicitly mentioned because participants felt it was so fundamental and self-evident that they didn't bring it up. However, several reasons contributed to this right being overlooked despite its importance. These reasons include: 1) the relative stability in the region over the past few years, 2) the high risks associated with returning to their homes in regime-controlled areas, and 3) the significant costs involved in returning. The same three reasons also explain why youth are not considering migration or seeking refuge elsewhere: 1) the relative stability in the region, which offers some educational opportunities, 2) the high risks associated with attempting to migrate illegally, and 3) the high costs of smuggling or obtaining necessary legal documents, such as passports.

Regarding the right to establish a family and marry—which the older generation viewed as more fundamental compared to the rights of freedom of expression or community participation—the researchers explained that this is due to the cultural and financial burdens placed on parents, who are typically responsible for supporting their children financially when it comes to marriage. This emphasis is particularly strong for the middle generation, who often bear the dual responsibility of supporting both their own immediate families and the extended family, all while facing the high costs associated with marriage.

The final discussion with the researchers aimed to clarify a contradiction found in the research: the older generation regarded basic needs and the right to establish a family as more important than freedoms and participation, yet they also expressed surprise that the younger generation is not interested in political participation. The older generation stated that without political involvement, youth cannot bring about change or achieve other rights, and they suggested that the younger generation is held back by a fear of political engagement.

The researchers explained that young people seemed focused on achieving what they viewed as their immediate needs, such as education and employment, with the idea that political rights could be pursued later. Other researchers suggested that youth avoid political participation because they lack the appropriate political space to exercise their rights freely, without restrictive ideologies. Additionally, youth may be unaware of the importance of their participation or lack confidence in their ability to effect change through political involvement.
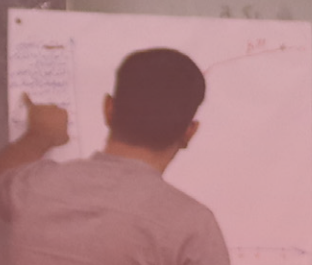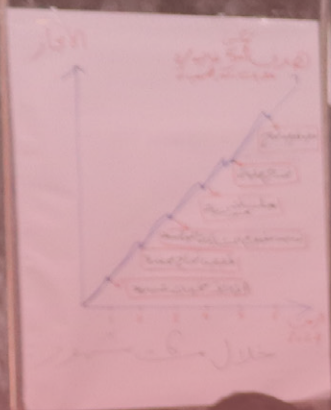
2 Power and Roles (workshop 1)

1. Discussion on Sources of Power and Roles Across Generations

Following the world cafe session, researchers and participants engaged in a discussion about their roles and sources of power, as well as those of other generations. Initially, each participant was asked to define their own roles and sources of power, and then describe those of other generations. This was done within their respective age groups to facilitate focused discussions. Participants were then brought together to discuss these dynamics collectively. They were asked to select a specific role to portray in a role-playing activity that highlighted the power dynamics between generations.
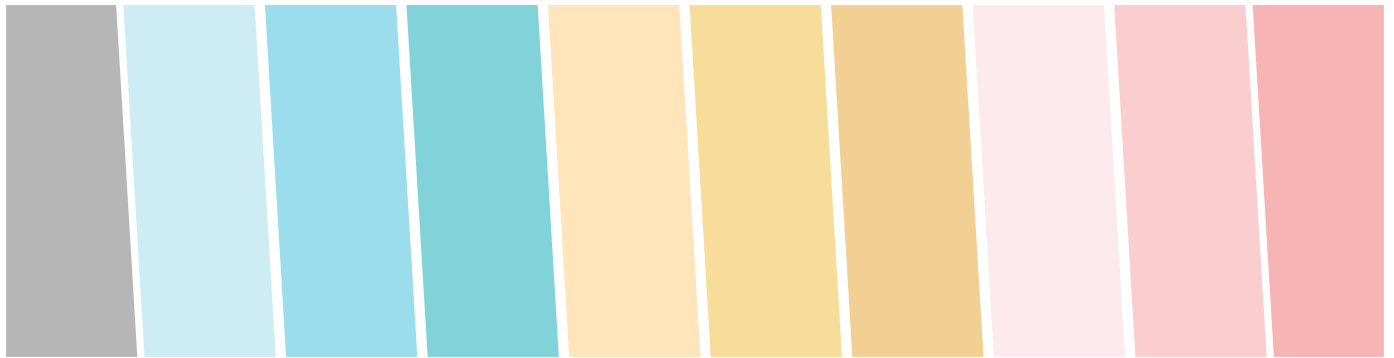
Youth aged 29 - 18

The younger generation see themselves as having technological proficiency, creativity, and a strong sense of social justice, and are ready to shape the future. Their unique strengths include:

- **Innovation and Creativity:** Generating new ideas and approaches to problem-solving.
- **Technological Expertise:** Leveraging technology to drive innovation and efficiency.
- **Social Awareness:** Advocating for social and environmental justice and expressing their opinions without fear.
- **Adaptability:** Embracing change and adapting to new circumstances.
- **Physical and Mental Strength:** Having a clear mind, a strong capacity for learning, and the ability to work long hours due to youthful enthusiasm and energy.
- **Love of Learning and Knowledge:** A passion for personal growth, self-confidence, and a strong desire to learn and acquire knowledge.
- **Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency:** Striving to achieve a high level of independence and self-reliance.
- **Enthusiasm and Energy:** High energy and eagerness to take on tasks and interact positively with others.
- **Acceptance of Others:** Willingness to listen to others' opinions and respect diversity.
- **Value for Family, Education, and Financial Awareness:** Recognizing family, education, and awareness as fundamental pillars.

They see the older generation as possessing greater expertise, a more developed character, practical knowledge of life and politics, and strength derived from family relationships and social standing.

General observations on the views regarding the rights of each generation

There was some divergence of views on generational rights, the most prominent of which were:

- The middle generation did not view health as a right for the older generation, unlike the the younger generation, which showed sympathy for their elders
- Both the younger and middle generations did not view the right to work as a priority for the older generation, although the younger generation mentioned their entitlement to work in ways that suited their physical capabilities.
- The older generation felt that the middle generation had the right to work, start a family and obtain basic rights such as housing.
- The middle generation felt the older generation had the right to freedom of expression and participation more important than the right to health and the right to live in dignity.
- The right to travel, especially for the younger generation, was not mentioned during the discussion of rights. It is only mentioned in a small way by the middle generation in talking about the importance of obtaining official papers
- Participants also noted that the right of return had not been talked about and justified it as a self-evident right. Participants explained that they live in relative safety when compared with the rest of Syria.
- All participants felt the activity helped them to learn about and understand the rights of others, and that the interventions of other generations had an impact on expanding their view of rights. Some however, found talking about rights in light of instability difficult, and that these rights are not secured or protected under conditions of war.

Adults aged 30 - 43

Often referred to as the "sandwich generation," the middle generation feel they balance the demands of work, family, and community. They possess a combination of youthful energy and mature experience, making them adaptable and resilient. Their key strengths include:

- **Practicality and Problem-Solving:** Applying practical experience to overcome challenges and find effective solutions.
- **Bridge-Building:** Connecting different generations and promoting mutual understanding.
- **Leadership and Management:** Leading teams and institutions with efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Achieving balance between professional and personal responsibilities.
- **Life Experiences and Physical Strength:** Possessing rich experiences that enhance their ability to face challenges while maintaining health and vitality.
- **Logical Thinking and Intellectual Openness:** Ability to think clearly, embrace change, and contribute to societal building.
- **Continuous Learning:** A constant pursuit of knowledge and skill development, along with a degree of academic and social-cultural awareness.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Ability to adapt to various challenging circumstances, particularly in insecure environments.

Their view of the strengths of other generations is in line with each generation's self-perception. They view the younger generation as having greater access to learning, knowledge, and unique youthful energy, gained through hard conditions. Meanwhile, they acknowledge the older generation's experience, cultural and political awareness, and balanced perspective that combines authenticity and renewal.

Adults over 44

The older generation see themselves as distinguished by their wisdom, experience, and strong ethical commitment, making them capable of providing valuable guidance and mentorship. Their deep understanding of history, culture, and traditions enables them to offer strategic insights and direction to younger generations. They excel in roles that require patience, perseverance, and long-term vision. Their key strengths include:

- **Mentorship and Guidance:** Sharing life experiences and knowledge with younger generations.
- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Protecting and promoting cultural traditions and values.
- Community Leadership: Serving as role models and inspiring others to contribute positively to society.
- **Strategic Planning:** Utilizing their wisdom and experience to develop long-term strategies and plans.

They perceive the younger generation as possessing physical strength, enthusiasm, and the freedom to express their views and aspirations. They recognize the younger generation's educational achievements and ability to seek employment, along with their persistence, ambition, and optimism in raising awareness and aspiring for leadership roles.

Based on this they see themselves capable of taking the following Leadership Roles:

Youth aged 29 - 18

- Continuing to learn
- Securing job opportunities and starting their own businesses
- Channeling positive energy into knowledge and professional pursuits for personal development
- Advocating for rights
- Contributing to rebuilding and emerging from the setbacks caused by war to achieve dreams and success.

Older generations agree on the role of younger generations in contributing to societal building, fostering awareness, and strengthening political and social roles. They believe that young people are capable of fulfilling roles such as:

- Enriching experiences with new knowledge and methods
- Facilitating tasks for the older generations
- Learning from the experiences of older generations
- Inspiring older generations to continue giving without despair

Adults aged 30 - 43

- Learning from life experiences
- Working to achieve self-sufficiency and family support
- Engaging with other generations
- Taking on responsibility and supporting societal advancement
- Analyzing experiences, developing ideas, and participating in finding and implementing solutions
- Raising awareness and guiding the younger generation.

Other generations also agree on the role of this generation in creating job opportunities that achieve economic sufficiency and elevate the country's economy, contributing to the preservation of freedom and dignity, and fostering societal development. The older generation adds that younger generations should build healthy families and a strong community, thereby contributing to a society founded on ethics.

Adults of 44 and over

- Providing mentorship, leadership, and consultation
- Differentiating between right and wrong
- Taking care of the younger generation

The younger and middle generations agree on the guidance and leadership roles of the older generation. However, the younger generation adds that the older generation should empower and properly guide young people to understand life, professional, and political matters, and place them in decision-making positions, thereby building an active young generation.
Additionally, the older generation has several personal and practical qualities, including:

- **Life Experiences, Awareness, and Insight:** Offering deep insights based on extensive experience and knowledge.
- **Strong Will and Patience:** The ability to endure, accept others, appreciate cultural differences, and persevere in achieving goals.
- **Financial Independence:** Ability to work and maintain financial independence

2. The Role Play Activity

Each group representing a specific generation developed a theatrical scene based on the discussions they had regarding sources of power and the roles they play. There were many roles performed by participants in the three groups:

The first generation chose:
1. Running for elections and the older generation mocking the possibility of youth participating in such experiences.
2. The oppressive father over the son due to suspicions about the son's behavior, and the son being weak in front of the father's tyranny.
3. The elder brother dominates the sister to deprive her of education.
4. A dialogue between a male and female student from two different universities.
5. The community leader and the young community activist.
6. An administrator at the university and a student complaining about success rates in English.

The second generation:
1. A young man applying for a job and being insulted by the older generation.
2. The mother is upset by the father's neglect in following up on their son, and the domineering father while the son works to support the family at the expense of his studies.
3. A young man applying for a job at an organization (health worker), where the behavior of the organization's supervisor is inappropriate, and the job applicant feels that the interview is a mere formality.
4. The traditional university professor and the restless student.
5. The manager and the employee.
6. The activists are dissatisfied with the current situation.

The third generation:
1. A landowner and a young farmer performing work inappropriately (cheating).
2. The son is dissatisfied with the living conditions and blaming the father.
3. A young woman who is late to class and gets reprimanded by the advisor.
4. The reckless son and the father.
5. The manager and the employee in the organization.
6. The manager and the employee.

Each group played out their scene to the larger group, with opportunities for others to intervene by interrupting the dialogue and taking on one of the roles. There was significant interaction from all generations in most sessions, except for one session where the third generation was so dominant that they left no space for others to intervene. One participant emphasized the importance of the activity in strengthening the bonds between groups and encouraging thinking that the other is "me" after a while when I grow up, or "me" some time ago when I was young.
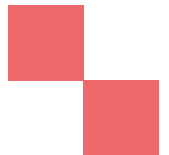
They stressed the importance of trying to think about how a person thinks not only about themselves but tries to see through the eyes of another. Participants pointed out that how disparity between generations leads to disparities in power and oppression, and most scenes showed the older generation as dominant over the younger generation, while in reality oppression occurs within generational groups, (i.e. in a scene of employees in the same organization or from younger to older (i.e. a son dissatisfied with the living conditions using his emotional power to pressure his dedicated father). However, there was general agreement that oppressive behaviour should be challenged by the broader community.

Moments of transformation (changes made through interventions) focused on an empathic response, indicating that the improper use of authority causes an imbalance of power scale, that customs and traditions negatively affect the empowerment of youth, and that the rigidity of the older generation prevents younger generations from being creative. The older generation expressed the importance of younger generations respecting their elders.

أصوات شابّة

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في بناء السلام وعملية صنع القرار

Young Voices

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and inclusion in Peacebuilding
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Indicative Comments

"As the teacher said, he who has no elder must buy one, and there must always be appreciation and respect for those older than them from the youth. They should not act without consulting their elders; their opinions must be considered, and they should be respected."

It was also emphasized that young people should have the skills to listen to and understand the older generation: "Today, young people are required to demand their needs and rights, but in a diplomatic manner."

One participant said, "Flexibility is required for any group, any young man, any young woman, and any person in life; social flexibility is required." This clarifies youth's need to adapt and be flexible in facing the demands of different generations, especially in an environment characterized by diverse ideas and experiences.

Another participant focused on a scene in which there was a gap between two students due to gender differences similar to that between universities in different areas of control, saying "Hostility is being sown among students; I am from Idlib University, you are from Aleppo University; neither of us recognizes the other's degree, not even your studies are acknowledged."

An older male (46) stated 'iIn my opinion youth should be willing to understand the things raised by the father because he is more experienced than them; one should benefit from the experience of those older than him".

An older Female (50) also asked for respect: 'The first generation should respect the third generation; it is the responsibility of the first generation to develop their skills so that they are in a society capable of decision-making'.

A middle generation female (35) said 'Regarding roles, we should not speak about the young man as if he is small; the father should also listen to the young man. For example, in the role of acting, the son was accused of smoking; the father should have allowed the son to defend his right instead of attacking him directly. Respecting the elder is a duty, but the youth's rights should not be lost.'

Generally elders see the youth as irresponsible, and youth see the rigidity of the older generation. The role play exercises presented several scenes that illustrated the dynamics related to power between generations and how to interact between them. In the scene of the community leader and the activist, the leader appeared in an authoritarian style reflecting condemnation of the activist's failure to perform his duties, with one participant noting: "The leader used the blame method in his dealings with the activist and showed him disapproval of his negligence and tardiness in performing his tasks". This scene reflects the relationship that often exists between older and younger generations in traditional societies, where authority and blame are directed publicly.

In the scene between the father and son, generational conflict was attributed to the father belonging to an old era and his son living a life that keeps up with modern times. In this scene, the father sees the son's behavior as something unacceptable from his traditional perspective, while the son expresses his desire for freedom and openness to contemporary values, illustrating the gap in values and priorities between generations. One of the participants said: "The youth is a wayward person keeping up with this era he is in, while the father is from an old era far removed from the youth's life." Also, the scene between the manager and the young employee portrayed the professional relationship between generations, where the manager appeared as a domineering person using his authority to direct, while the young employee seemed inexperienced and in need of support. This scene reflects the disparity in experience and power between generations. As one participant said: "The manager was domineering and had authority over the employee, which shows how intergenerational dynamics can affect organizational work environments."

The scene of the employee in the organization and the job applicant was repeated several times, but the scene did not sufficiently specify whether the power interaction was due to a generational gap or if it resulted from a position or social status created by the job situation in the organization. However, what distinguished this scene was that the first generation changed the job applicant to empower the youth to confront the authority of the employee in the organization. It is noticeable in this scene that domination was primarily influenced by position and social status, which confirms that domination may not always be directed from elders towards youth but may also relate to the possession of power, and may occur within the same generation or from younger generations towards elders.

In two similar scenes, the intervention from participants of the first and second generations was positively aimed at changing the hiring manager to interact positively with the job applicant or the employee who was late to work, reflecting the understanding required between generations or among individuals of the same generation. "The manager should be understanding and not be irritable; the strength of the bond between generations was evident when the manager was understanding; we saw the strength of the bond."

One of the scenes showed the second generation's dynamics between a university professor and a student, where interventions took a negative direction despite participants being alerted that interventions should suggest a preferable response. The university professor was replaced by someone from the third generation who used a provocative and mocking style towards the student in front of his peers. A subsequent intervention replaced the student with someone who responded provocatively, pointing out the professor's corruption and openness to bribes. One participant (Male, 28) noted, "Through the roles of generations, we must highlight the misuse of power by any generation that holds authority. We should direct this power towards something positive, not negative; it should benefit society."

Participants expressed their enthusiasm for this activity and how it helped develop a positive communication style between generations. Participants were able to develop a perception of the roles that youth could take on to better fulfill their responsibilities and duties. One of these was the responsibility to advocate for youth and their rights to reach decision-makers and contribute to policies that ensure these rights are met. Additionally, there is a role for youth who have not had the opportunity to empower themselves in various fields, #to take on leadership roles that help them develop, grant them their rights, and motivate them to fulfill their duties towards society.

Indicative Comments

"Youth must have self-confidence. They don't speak up even if they are wronged, even if it's with their parents. They must defend their rights." (Male, 28)

"Of course, youth have physical strength, intellectual strength, and the third power, and most importantly, time. Anything they correct in their lives, they have time for, especially ages 20 to 30; they are open to change, unlike the third generation who, when confronted with a topic, says, 'I don't have time.' Time is more important than physical and intellectual strength." (Male, 37)

"Now I see youth reaching any community or work organization; the administrative or job position does not deprive you of moral values and proper upbringing. Regardless of your parents, it is important to educate yourself as a young person. As long as you reach a job or position, you have someone who taught you and raised you and gave you a certificate. Your duty is to exchange respect, whether you made a mistake or not, or whether you worked or didn't; by your will or job position, respect others." (Male 40)

"The overall situation of society and the fear of starting and the fear of failure are the most important factors preventing youth from fulfilling their roles, as well as the lack of resources, and perhaps the authority imposed on youth at home, in society, and at their work." (Male 35)

"There is a lack of capacity building for youth to fulfill their roles in society and a lack of awareness of the importance of their roles. There are even youths who do not know why they are alive." (Female 37)

"Older generations take over everything in managing organizations and decision-making spaces, and they refrain from educating youth. 'Well, teach us, give us some information and training, and we will be in their place, but this doesn't suit them.'" (Female 23)

"The message is to society in general, not just to youth; our battle is a battle of awareness, and when we win the battle of awareness, all generations will prevail."
''Youth can waste time on other things, "they put their strength into things that don't benefit anything."

"Sometimes, the de facto authorities prevent youth from expressing their opinions, so they turn to work."

Summary of Findings on Power and Roles

There was some divergence of views on generational rights, the most prominent of which were:

The middle generation did not view health as a right for the older generation, unlike the the younger generation, which showed sympathy for their elders

Both the younger and middle generations did not view the right to work as a priority for the older generation, although the younger generation mentioned their entitlement to work in ways that suited their physical capabilities.
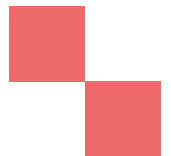
The older generation felt that the middle generation had the right to work, start a family and obtain basic rights such as housing.

The middle generation felt the older generation had the right to freedom of expression and participation more important than the right to health and the right to live in dignity.

The right to travel, especially for the younger generation, was not mentioned during the discussion of rights. It is only mentioned in a small way by the middle generation in talking about the importance of obtaining official papers

Participants also noted that the right of return had not been talked about and justified it as a self-evident right. Participants explained that they live in relative safety when compared with the rest of Syria.

All participants felt the activity helped them to learn about and understand the rights of others, and that the interventions of other generations had an impact on expanding their view of rights. Some however, found talking about rights in light of instability difficult, and that these rights are not secured or protected under conditions of war.

Reflections from researchers after the first workshop.

Bridging Generations: The topic of reconciling perspectives between generations, especially between the first (29-18) and third generations (44+), was addressed for the first time. One participant from the first generation emphasized the importance of bridging gaps, particularly those arising from educational differences or age disparities. The participant affirmed that these sessions could serve as a foundation for positive change, allowing each generation to play its role in society. The participant also stressed the importance of just peace, asserting that the concepts of peace and justice are not contradictory, and that society needs both. (Killi)

Changing Mindset and Perspectives During the Session: Initially, one participant was sceptical about the value of the research, expressing that the session could be condensed into two minutes instead of taking four hours. However, as the session progressed and activities commenced, his interest grew, and he began participating in all activities. He even started asking questions about the research and the sources of ideas, expressing his desire to attend other sessions. (Azaz)

Challenges in Understanding Activities: Participants noted some difficulty in understanding certain activities, which required repeated explanations for clarity. This was especially true in distinguishing between the concept of rights and the concept of needs that help us achieve these rights.t

Tension Between Generations: Tension was observed at the beginning of the sessions between the second and third generations, while the first generation appeared less reactive and calmer in handling situations. Part of this tension stemmed from provocative statements made by the second generation, such as, "The older generation doesn't need job opportunities; they've had their chance and should now make way for younger generations." (35 year old female from Killi). Another statement expressed by a participant from the second generation suggested that the "Third generation should go to an elderly home, live with dignity and just wait for their end." 31 year old male, Killi

Resistance Toward the Word "Peace"
Participants generally associated the word "peace" with the broader national-level conflict. As a result, they preferred using alternative terms such as "coexistence." While the word "peace" was initially chosen as a symbolic theme at the beginning of the session, participants expressed a stronger inclination toward the concept when asked to articulate their positions. However, many participants opted not to engage in the debate, preferring to remain neutral or expressing that peace cannot be achieved without justice.

Dominant Influencing Factors:
The participants highlighted that, beyond generational differences, displacement emerged as a significant factor shaping perceptions and relationships between peace and justice.

3 Debates on peace and justice (workshop 2)

The second workshop started by asking all participants to describe peace or justice in one word, then place themselves on a force field to indicate their position in relation to how far they prioritised one or the other of these. They were then asked to select 3 participants to take part in a debate about peace or justice, before returning to the force field to indicate whether or not their position had changed. The goal was to understand how far people are willing to compromise for peace or fight for their rights. Discussions held across the sessions in Darkoush, Salqin, Maarat Misrin, and Azaz reflected varying perspectives on peace and justice among different generations and communities in Syria.

Findings from the Exercise

1. Peace vs. Justice Preferences:
- In Darkoush, most participants leaned towards peace, possibly due to their stable backgrounds, with only a few young people emphasizing justice.
- In Salqin, the majority, especially the displaced individuals, prioritized justice over peace.
- The second generation (ages 42-30) in both sessions saw peace and justice as interconnected, not mutually exclusive.

2. Sessions in Maarat Misrin and Azaz:
- Across all generations, there was a common view that achieving justice would lead to peace. Some people preferred peace but with conditions, and in Azaz, participants often used "coexistence" instead of "peace," as peace was associated with reconciliation.
- Older participants (43 and above) demonstrated a more profound understanding of peace and were more willing to compromise, due to their life experiences. Younger generations lacked experience and were less aware of the level of compromise required for peace.

3. Regional and Generational Differences:
- In Killi, despite generational divisions between peace and justice, the discussion was dominated by the second and third generations. Justice was the majority choice, particularly among the displaced.
- Some participants resisted choosing either concept, with skepticism towards achieving peace or justice under the current circumstances.

4. External and Internal Challenges:
- In Darkoush, some felt that the peace being discussed implied a loss of decision-making power, seeing it as a peace imposed by outside forces.
- The discussions highlighted the difficulty in separating peace from justice, particularly when stability for displaced populations remains elusive.
- Security conditions in Syria influenced the dialogue; a debate session in Salqin revealed heightened tensions following news of ongoing conflicts.

5. Consensus on Compromise and Regional Influence:

- During group discussions, participants began to identify areas where compromises could be made for collective goals. Some were willing to concede local decision-making if regional peace was achieved, acknowledging that full control might not be feasible. Participants recognized that justice, if achieved, would likely serve the interests of current authorities, making it "relative justice" tied to the authority's agenda.
- In Killi, there was a willingness to set aside personal concerns for the greater good.
- Participants recognized that justice, if achieved, would likely serve the interests of current authorities, making it "relative justice" tied to the authority's agenda.

6. Youth and Older Generations' Attitudes:

- Younger participants tended to focus on claiming rights, whereas older generations leaned more towards peace.
- There was no significant generational divide regarding the demands for justice and peace, but younger participants were less familiar with the required compromises.

Overall, discussions showed that peace and justice are deeply interlinked for Syrians, with preferences often shaped by displacement experiences and local security conditions. The debate also underscored the complexities of pursuing peace under the influence of external agendas and the resilience needed to navigate these challenges.

Summary of finding on Peace and Justice

At the beginning of the session, when participants were asked to express their thoughts on peace and justice in one word, most spoke of the bright image of peace. However, during the debate, the majority focused on justice. There was a preference for using terms like coexistence and understanding instead of peace, to avoid discussing peace with the regime. The majority leaned toward justice across all generations, with a stronger inclination among the younger generation to discuss peace. However, it was difficult for participants to change their roles, and there was significant resistance to role reversal with a tendency to forgo rights for the sake of peace only if the right was personal or if the reason was regional pressures. The distinction between peace and rights was influenced by background with a tendency for justice from displaced people and for peace among host communities.
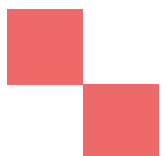
Reflections from the researchers after the second workshop

As is custom in a participatory approach, a reflection session was held after the second workshop on the debate between justice and peace. Researchers initially expressed concerns about the sensitivity of the topic, fearing participants might either overwhelmingly favor one side or refuse to engage in the debate. However, after the workshop, the researchers noted that the interaction exceeded expectations. Participants demonstrated diverse perspectives and positions, though there was notable resistance to using the term "peace." Many participants expressed a preference for the term "coexistence" instead.

During the exercise, when participants were asked to switch sides in the debate, many resisted changing their stance, reflecting the depth of their convictions. Compared to the first workshop, the location played a more pronounced role in shaping the dynamics of this session. However, the audience's background was the primary influencing factor. Displaced participants leaned more toward supporting justice, while members of the host community favored peace and stability.

Feedback from the Round Table held with NGO and INGO Stakeholders

The Round Table, held in Gaziantep on 20th November, brought together representatives from local and international NGOs who had been working in Northwest Syria to share and discuss findings. Participants were enthusiastic about the results and the potential for this work and made a number of useful recommendations.

1. Unpacking the terms peace and justice at the start of the research process, in order for participants to really explore what they mean by these and the implications of each
2. A linking of rights with responsibilities so that during the research different generational groups looked not only at what they might reasonably expect from their life stage, but the duties or responsibilities they might take on in return
3. A potential reframing of the concept of 'rights' into reasonable life expectations, rights assumes someone else will supply this, and peace is different from coexistence, these areas could have implications for a future united Syria
4. Encouraging the sharing of results at local, national and international level and for researchers to share within their families as well as among their peers. Round Table participants saw the potential for this work at all levels, to facilitate a better understanding of youth agency, and to advocate for their inclusion in activism and decision making
5. Collaboration with other organisations through dissemination of tools and by offering training to other groups so this work might be upscaled
6. Explore possibility of doing some similar work online with diaspora groups
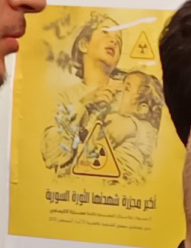
Conclusions

This research was held as a pilot to trial the potential for youth researchers and for participatory methodologies to build understanding and cohesion among different generational groups in Northwest Syria. The findings have helped to identify their perspectives on rights and roles and how each generation views the other, as well as providing a deeper understanding of each generation's perception of rights, justice, and peace. This understanding contributes to shaping the view of youth as rights-holders and exploring how this perspective can enhance youth participation and engagement in the peace process or their defense of rights in Syria's future.

It has revealed a clear inclination among young people toward social justice, and they appeared less rigid than older generations as well as showing more empathy towards them. Their appetite for building relationships between young people in Northwest Syria and other regions shows how a shared understanding of rights among them could foster cooperation in defending these rights or advancing steps towards peace in an effort to find a balance between the two, which participants referred to as a "just peace" or "rights-based peace."

Researcher reflections indicate their willingness to be positive actors in any peace process and open to learning from and with their elders as well as having energy, creativity and skills to share. The relationships built up online among researchers from different areas is a promising indication of the appetite for a youth advocacy movement as regional groups reach out to each other to share stories and debate findings. It shows the importance of community building and social transformation to strengthen society and bring about structural change towards a sustainable peace, an approach that contrasts with focusing solely on sources of power to find immediate solutions.

Learning about the rights and needs of other generations and discussing them openly reinforced understanding of these concepts and many felt that participating in this activity fostered a deeper respect for the rights of other generations. The role-playing exercises enabled participants to view peace and conflict on both national and local levels, observing conflicts not only between groups but also in everyday relationships—between fathers and sons, managers and employees, professors and students—helping them recognize the nuances of conflict and peace on a local scale.

While most felt that peace and justice are parallel processes, this is often not the case. People define justice in different ways as the research shows and in relation to their position and view of context. Co-existence is a more comfortable term, although host communities prioritise stability. However, because of the close connections people make between peace and justice, compromises with the Regime seem unlikely, but connections between new generations could lead to building something new and equal between them for the future.

Working with concepts of peace, justice and rights is challenging, when people see no path towards peace, no way of securing or guaranteeing their rights and hold different views on what constitutes justice. However they are the issues that motivate people to participate in activism, and while activism itself does not necessarily create peace, it does encourage people to participate and to envision a better future.

Taking a participatory and action research is significant in exploring the potential for greater participation in society and the enthusiasm that these approaches were met with are an indication of how well they can work, not only with younger people but with different generational groups. The opportunity for dialogue between groups and across regions has led to a deeper understanding of the different perspectives of older and younger generations, and built friendships across identity groups. Young people are building on these connections to look at ways to work together to get their voice heard, and a united peace and advocacy group could be established through distance communications. If they go into this, willing to learn from the mistakes and wisdom of older groups, committed to inclusion and a peaceful transition and feeling themselves all part of a united Syria, such a movement has the potential to make a significant difference in the future.

Addendum

Within days of completing and writing up this research the context in Syria has changed dramatically, with the sudden outstanding of Assad and the fall of the Regime that has dominated the country and maintained its divisions for so long. It is too early to say how things will unfold from here on in, but there are strong voices of hope for a united Syria.

In this new context the work of Door Beyond War is more important than ever before. The aspirations voiced in this research for a transitional period towards a united country, overcoming these divisions and building understanding, has suddenly begun to seem a reality. Research like this, which reaches out between former Regime and non-regime held areas, that brings young people into direct dialogue with those who fought earlier for this freedom and focuses discussion on exploring concepts peace and justice might and the rights and responsibilities of different groups seems vital. In the coming weeks as the new government gradually forms, a country wide, youth led action research programme, developed alongside, could make a significant contribution to this new reality.
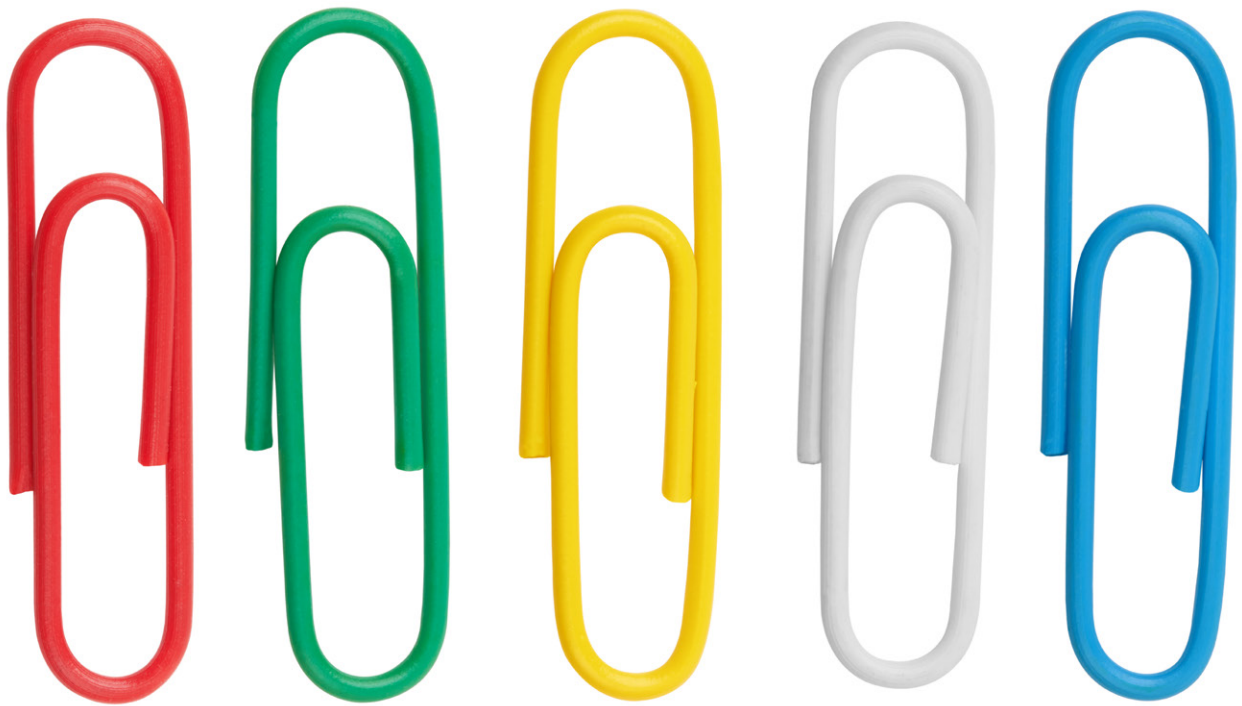
List of Annexes

Individual Commitment Document

A document of commitment to participate in the dialogue session

- **Research Description**

The research aims to:

1. Understand the gaps between different generations in Syria.
2. Identify the needs, rights and priorities of each age group.
3. Identify the sources of strength and potential roles of each group.
4. Formulate practical recommendations to enhance understanding and collaboration between different generations.

- **Your obligations as a participant:**

Participate in the dialogue session and express your opinion on it, as it will be 4-5 hours long, as this document is considered as a permit to agree to film and record the session to be unloaded later, so we ask you to sign this paper to confirm your commitment to us, knowing that participation with us is voluntary and completely confidential and that the need for audio recording of the session helps the blogger in unloading it later.

- **Use of Information**

The information you present in the session will be analyzed and used in participatory research entitled Bridging the Generation Gap

Confidentiality and privacy

All records and information from this research will be kept as confidential as possible, your participation will be anonymous - no names or identification

supervising management will have access to any relevant files and recordings, which will be stored for the duration of the research project.

If you agree to participate in the research, please complete the following section:

I am the undersigned:

- I declare my commitment to:
  - Participation in the session in the region........................ On ..../..../2024
  - Consent to take a photo for notarization.
  - Record the session to help *the team* unload it later.

	lifetime		Participant Name
Displaced - Resident	Status	Male - Female	Genger
	Participant's signature		Education
	Date		Researcher

Annex 2
Graphs showing results from the World Cafe Session

Youth 29-19 years

Their own priorities are as follows:
- Education rated the highest priority, (identified by %64 of participants),
- The right to participate and freedom of expression second (identified by %23.1 of participants)
- The right to work slightly below that (identified by %20.5 of participants)

Adults 43 - 30 years felt priorities for youth are:
- Education top priority (identified by %60.9 of participants
- The right to work second (identified by %26.1 of participants)
- Freedom of expression and participation third (identified by %21.7 of participants)

Adults over 44 felt priorities for youth are
- Education a right for youngest generation, (%65.4)
- The right to work second (%34.6)
- The right to establish a family and marry (%15.4)
- The right to freedom of expression (%11.5)

Generations perspective on the right of people between 18-29 old

Legend:
- 18*29
- 30*43
- 44*

Categories: Education, Freedom and Participation, Rights to work, Marrige
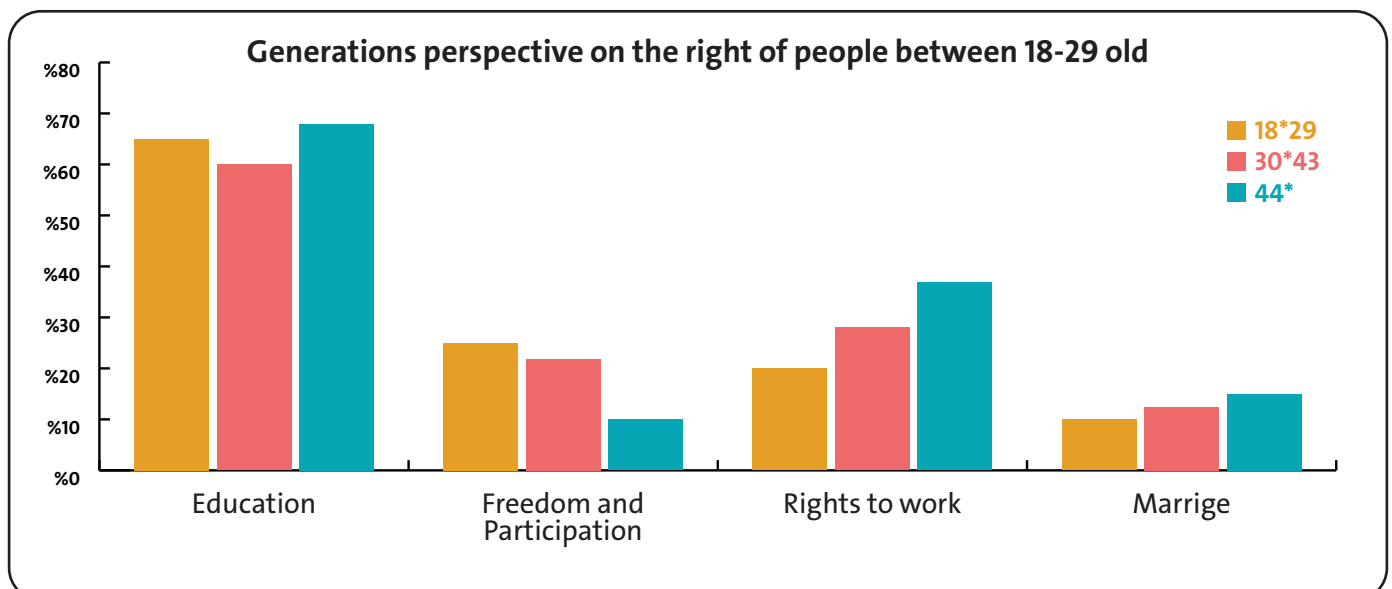
Adults aged 30-43 years

Their own priorities are as follows:
- The right to work the top priority (identified by %52.2 of participants)
- The right for participation and freedom of expression (%30.4),
- The right for marriage (%21.7)
- The right for education (%17.4)
- The right to have official papers (%13)

Young people feel this age group deserve
- The right to work (%38.5)
- The right to marry (%20.5)
- The right to participation and freedom of expression (%23.1)

Adults over 44 feel they deserve
- The right to work (%50)
- The right to marry
- Basic rights such as housing (%19.2)

This is indicated in the graph below.

Generations perspective on the right of people between 30-43 old

Legend: 18*29 (orange), 30*43 (red), 44* (teal)

Categories: Rights to work, Marrige, Freedom and Participation, Basic rights (food, house)

Adults aged 44 and over

Adults over 44 felt they deserved

- Health Care (%50)
- The right to work (%42.3)
- To live with dignity and respect (%30.8)
- To live with safety and stability (%19.2)

Young people felt they should be entitled to

- Health (%28.2)
- To live with dignity (%26.6)
- To live with safety (%17.9)
- The right to work according to their age (%5.1)

Adults aged 43-30 see this group as deserving of

- The right of participation and freedom of expression (%34.8)
- The right to live with dignity, safety and stability (%30.4),
- The right to work (%13)

These are illustrated in the graph below.

Generations perspective on the right of people between 30-43 old

Legend: 18*29, 30*43, 44*

Categories: Rights to work; Live safetey, peace and stability; Live with dignity , respect and recognition; health care, social insurance and financial support; Freedoms and participations

Annex 3
Constructive roles in the society and abling/disabling factors

The Desired Society	Frequency
A society of justice and dignity (respects the law, free of injustice, preserves citizens' rights and dignity, and achieves justice and equality)	%24.32
An aware and educated society	%13.51
A safe and stable society	%10.81
A free society (capable of competing with developed nations)	%10.81
An active society	%10.81
A cohesive society	%8.11
A society that accepts others	%2.70
A pluralistic civil society	%2.70
An advanced and civilized society	%2.70
A peaceful society	%2.70
A society healed from social issues	%2.70
A society that believes in the revolutionary ideology	%2.70
An empowered and conservative society	%2.70
A society that provides job opportunities	%2.70

Constructive Roles	Frequency
Youth empowerment (guiding youth to seize opportunities, building a generation capable of making change)	%23.53
Community participation (volunteering and initiatives, proposing activities and initiatives)	%20.59
Leadership and planning	%11.76
Utilizing experience	%8.82
Raising awareness between generations to build peace and justice	%5.88
Role of awareness and freedom of expression	%2.94
Teamwork and solidarity	%2.94
Building a value system	%2.94
Continuity and maturity	%2.94
Solidarity and social security	%2.94
Building educational institutions	%2.94
Providing all expertise and capabilities	%2.94
Supporting community members	%2.94
Placing the right person in the right position	%2.94
Knowledge, learning, and dialogue	%2.94

Obstacles / disabling factors	Frequency
Political conditions (political instability)	%11.86
Traditions and customs (rigid societal mindset)	%11.86
War	%10.17
Security situation (chaos and absence of unified authority)	%10.17
Lack of financial resources	%8.47
Lack of job opportunities	%6.78
Lack of capabilities	%5.08
De facto authorities	%5.08
Economic challenges	%5.08
Limited opportunities	%3.39
Marginalization	%3.39
Misguided individual behaviors	%3.39
Failed leadership	%3.39
Lack of recognition of skills and qualifications	%1.69
Racism	%1.69
Weak human resources	%1.69
Lack of real shared spaces	%1.69
Favoritism	%1.69
Regulatory policies	%1.69
Psychological support	%1.69
Ideological contradictions among youth	%1.69
Fear of failure	%1.69

Enabling Factors	Frequency
Training and development	%13.56
Knowledge and continuous learning	%10.17
Experience and public relations	%8.47
Community support	%6.78
Perseverance and continuity (not giving up and continuing to strive)	%6.78
Social awareness	%5.08
Empowerment and partnership programs	%5.08
Self-confidence	%5.08
Networking and effective communication	%5.08
Ambition and desire for improvement	%5.08
Volunteering and community participation	%5.08
Decision-making ability	%3.39
Economic freedom	%3.39
Respect for others' opinions	%3.39
Possession of tools of strength	%3.39
Energy and incentives	%3.39
Political freedom	%1.69

Annex 4
Table of Recommendations

Most of the recommendations were directed to decision makers from the authorities, then to NGOs, and lastly for youth themselves.

Frequency	Recommendations	Age Group
3 times	1. Raise awareness and education	
3 times	2. Provide job opportunities and facilitations	
3 times	3. Training sessions to raise awareness and practical empowerment	
2 times	4. Involve youth in community activities	18-29
2 times	5. Empower youth to be able to make decisions	
2 times	6. Respect opinions and seek mutual understanding to reach solutions	
2 times	7. Support education and youth capacity building	
3 times	1. Provide job opportunities	
2 times	2. Increase training and dialogue sessions	
2 times	3. Place the right person in the right position	
2 times	4. Respect diverse capabilities and appreciate others	30-42
2 times	5. Spread knowledge and ethics to achieve societal advancement	
2 times	6. Prioritize education and a dignified livelihood	
2 times	1. Promote knowledge and learning	
2 times	2. Constructive dialogue and acceptance of others' opinions	43 and above
1 time	3. Provide programs for intergenerational knowledge exchange	

General Recommendations to Enhance the Role of Youth and Intergenerational Communication (by Frequency)

General Recommendations	Frequency
1. Strengthen youth leadership roles and allow them to take initiative	3 times
2. Provide dialogue spaces for different generations to exchange experiences and cultures	2 times
3. Boost youth self-confidence and empower them to make decisions	2 times
4. Hold sessions and workshops that bring parents and children together to enhance intergenerational understanding	2 times
5. Work towards building strong civil and scientific institutions that support youth empowerment	2 times
6. Invest in education and provide opportunities to develop youth skills	2 times
7. Encourage collaborative work and cooperation between various entities and individuals	2 times
8. Focus on community issues and political awareness without being swayed by rumors	2 times
9. Direct clear recommendations to decision-makers to enhance youth roles and provide opportunities	2 times

General Recommendations for Society (by Frequency)

General Recommendations for Society	Frequency
1. Constantly strive for positive change and avoid despair	2 times
2. Strengthen internal and external communication with influential entities	2 times
3. Moderately and effectively enhance the role of women in society	2 times
4. Utilize human resources and invest in available talents and skills	2 times
5. Promote political awareness and work to eliminate external dependency	2 times

Dialogue Session: Bridging the Generational Gap in Syria

1 Introduction (15 minutes)

1. **Welcome and Introduction:**
   - Provide a brief welcome and introduction to the facilitator.
   - A presentation of the objectives and agenda of the session. (The first page of the introduction can be used in the definition of the research)
   - Introduction should be smoothly divided (library shelves)
   - The research deals with a discussion on the dialectic of peace and justice (rights / accountability), can peace be achieved without accountability? Or does accountability, the guarantee of rights and the achievement of justice require peace first? There is disagreement among Syrians about the priority of peace or justice.
   - Does this difference between the two concepts differ between generations? Whether the older generation, who were over 29 years old at the beginning of the revolution today, are over 44 years old, or the generation that was young between 18 and 29 but today is over the age of 33, or the current young generation, which was between 4 and 15 years old at the beginning of the revolution. What are the differences between these generations in their view of rights and peace?

2. **Research Objectives:**
   - The research follows an applied participatory approach that is led by youth, so one of the objectives of the research is to empower young people with participatory research tools.
   - Facilitate communication and cooperation between young people to build a charter on youth rights in Syria, knowing that on a general level there is a charter of human rights, women's rights and children's rights, but there is no charter on youth rights.
   - How intergenerational power dynamics affect youth rights and peacebuilding efforts
   - What are the risks facing young people as they seek to build peace or defend our rights, and what are the things that support them or support mechanisms?

3. **Research Stages:**
   - Today, we are in a session that represents the first stage, which will focus on understanding the rights and needs of young people and the rest of the generations, in addition to understanding the sources of strength of each generation, especially young people, in addition to the roles played by each generation.
   - The second phase will build on the analysis of this session to understand how intergenerational differences affect power dynamics and the relationship between peace and justice.

4. **Icebreaker activity:**
   - A quick activity to help participants get to know each other and feel comfortable. For example, each participant shares their name, role, and one hope they have for this session.
   - Development of norms

2 Understanding the Generational Gap (10 minutes)

Explanation of the three age groups:
- The first group: those who were over 30 years old at the beginning of the revolution and now are over 44 years old.
- The second group: those who were between 18 and 29 years old at the beginning of the revolution and now they are between 32 and 43 years old.
- The third group: those who were under 18 at the beginning of the revolution and are now between 14 and 31 years old.

Explanation of the three age groups:
- Analysis of the needs, rights and priorities of each group (60 minutes)
  - Photo activity:
    - **Stage I (20 minutes)**
      1. Place large white sheets on the hall wall so that each sheet represents an age group as described in the previous paragraph.
      2. 2. Place 3 pictures on the walls (it can be two pictures for each age group (male and female), each representing an age group.
      3. 3. Ask participants to look at the pictures and think of the following questions (15 minutes):
         - What are his most priority fundamental rights?
         - What are the needs of this person?
      4. Ask each person to put a colored sheet of paper on each photo that answers the questions and write (5 minutes):
         - Participant Name (optional)
         - His age
         - His gender

      > **Note to the moderator:** Take a picture of the paper before moving on to the next step.

    - **Stage II (25 minutes)**
      - Divide participants into 3 groups according to age
      - Ask each group to stand at the appropriate white paper for their age
      - Ask each group to select a facilitator and writer on the paper.
      - Ask them to summarize the answers on a new white sheet of paper in 15 minutes
      - After completing the summary, ask each group to move on to the next group and give feedback within 5 minutes.
      - After completion, ask each group to move back to the next group and give feedback within 5 minutes.
    - Post-Activity Discussion: (15 minutes)
      - I ask all participants to return to their places
      - Open the conversation by asking the following question:
        - What surprised you the most about the session?
        - What assumptions did you have about people of the other generation?
        - What assumptions did you have about people of your generation?
        - What are the most surprising similarities/differences?
        - What did you learn from exercise?

Before starting the activity

introduce the following to the participants with examples:

- Human rights: They are rights granted to all human beings without discrimination. Freedom of expression and opinion.
- Civil rights: rights granted at the level of the same country (Article 42: Freedom of expression and publication by legitimate means is guaranteed).
- Needs: These are specific issues that contribute to reaching the right (for example: if the priority of young people is the right to education, only this right is achieved through recognition, university scholarships, travel opportunities...)

Note: There is a universal charter of human rights, children's rights, women's rights, but no charter of youth rights, so the research seeks to focus more on the basic rights of young people.

3 Identify the strengths of each group (105 minutes)

1. **Activity Instructions (30 minutes):**

- Ask each participant individually to reconsider the image representing their age group. And then to answer the following questions within 15 minutes.
    - What sources of strength does a person have?
    - What roles can he perform based on strength
    - What sources of power do other generations have?
    - What roles can they play based on that power?
- Ask participants to gather based on age and discuss answers.
- Ask each group to develop a theatrical scene that reflects roles and power from their group's perspective.
    - Explain the interactive theater to them before you start making groups.
    - Sample with the collaborator using one of the examples from Guide2.
        - Open the question
        - Have each group develop the scene in 15 minutes.

■ Helpful examples for ● the researcher

Example: A dialogue between a young man and his boss at work.
- The manager was not satisfied with the performance of the young man and the results he provided, so he asked the youth to work better.
- Young: Dissatisfied with the manager's style and justifies the failure to work because of his overload and lack of opportunity to attend appropriate training.

Example: A dialogue between a father and son about the roles of each generation in the current reality:
- Father: This generation does not bear sufficient responsibility and is busy with social networking sites that do not make any impact
- Son: The current generation uses more effective tools of influence than the tools used by parents that caused the loss of the case

Example 3: A dialogue between a student in the community and an official in decision making platforms.
- Student: You have formed a new political entity and clearly set criteria for youth exclusion, which is a repetition of repeated exclusions before and during the revolution.
- Official: Political work requires experience, know-how and practice, and young people have not had opportunities to have this experience, and the matter is serious and needs a minimum level of experience that cannot be tolerated.

- ◦ Allow other groups to intervene by freezing the group that represents and suggesting changes to the view. (15 minutes for presentation and interventions)
- ◦ Ask the remaining two groups to repeat the same two previous steps (15 minutes * two sets)
- ◦ After the presentations, open the discussion for 15 minutes and use the following questions:
- ◦ After finishing showing the scenes we ask everyone to go back to their places and start asking the following questions:
    - • What is your basic feedback from the activity and performances?
    - • Which scene most expressed the interaction of power between generations? Give examples from the scene.
    - • What roles should young people play best (what are their responsibilities and duties)
    - • What power do young people have to do these roles?
   - • What prevents them from taking on these roles?

2. **Closing Activity: Formulation of recommendations (30 minutes)**
    - • Recommendations Activity:
    1. Based on the previous discussion, ask participants to formulate recommendations on how to empower each group to play constructive roles in the community (15 minutes).
        - • What community would you like to see?
        - • What is a constructive role?
        - • What's holding you back?
        - • What can you do?
    2. Divide participants into small groups, each focusing on one age group, to discuss and detail recommendations (15 minutes)
        - • Encourage participants to think, if they are going to empower other young people? And also think about what they need to play more effective roles? Let them also think about who needs to provide this support and empowerment.
    3. Conclusion (15 minutes)
        - • Share results:
            1. Provide recommendations and key points identified by each group.
            2. Summarize the main points and thank the participants.
        - • Tools and resources needed:
            1. Images representing the three age groups, to be displayed on the walls.
            2. Paper and pens for taking notes and drafting recommendations.
            3. Large plates or sheets to display results.
        - • Session Objectives:
            1. Understand the gaps between different generations in Syria.
            2. Identify the needs, rights and priorities of each age group.
            3. Identify the strengths/strengths and potential roles of each group. 4. Formulate practical recommendations to enhance understanding and collaboration between different generations.
        - ▫ t

Appendix 1
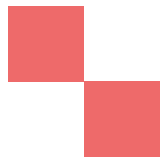
Human Rights in the Syrian Context

Human rights are fundamental and inalienable rights enjoyed by every individual regardless of nationality, race, religion or other status. These rights are internationally recognized and based on international covenants and treaties such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights , the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Syria is a state party to many of these international treaties and conventions, which legally oblige it to respect, protect and promote these rights.

Human rights examples:

- Right to life, liberty and security of person.
- Freedom of expression and opinion.
- The right to a fair trial.
- Freedom of religion and belief.
- The right to education, work and an adequate standard of living.

Civil Rights in the Syrian Context

Civil rights are the set of rights that a state grants and protects to its citizens through its constitution and national laws. These rights aim to ensure equality and justice and to protect individuals from discrimination and abuses by the government or other individuals. In Syria, civil rights are defined and regulated by the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic and various national laws.

Examples of civil rights in the Syrian constitution:

- Article 33: Affirms the principle of equality of rights and duties of citizens without any discrimination as to sex, origin, language, religion or belief.
- Article 42: Freedom of expression and publication shall be guaranteed by lawful means.
- Article 44: Freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration shall be guaranteed in accordance with the principles of the Constitution.
- Article 45: Freedom of association and trade union organizations shall be guaranteed on a national basis and by peaceful means.
- Article 48: It protects the right of citizens to education and guarantees free education at all levels.
- Article 51: Affirms the right to litigation and fair trial guarantees.
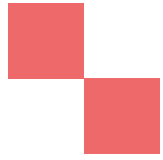
The difference between human rights and civil rights in the Syrian

Human rights are fundamental and inalienable rights enjoyed by every individual regardless of nationality, race, religion or other status. These rights are internationally recognized and based on international covenants and treaties such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights , the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Syria is a state party to many of these international treaties and conventions, which legally oblige it to respect, protect and promote these rights.

context 1

1. Scope and Source:
   - Human rights: universal and based on international conventions and treaties to which states are bound, including Syria. These rights belong to every individual regardless of nationality or legal status.
   - Civil rights: defined within the framework of the state and based on the Syrian constitution and national laws. These rights mainly concern Syrian citizens and determine the relationship between them and the state.
2. Legal nature:
   - Human rights: They are international standards that states must respect and apply, and the state may be held internationally accountable if it violates these rights.
   - Civil rights: regulated and enforced by national authorities, and individuals can resort to national courts to protect or restore these rights if violated.
3. Changeability and modification:
   - Human rights: are considered inalienable and unalienable, and difficult to modify or derogate from them.
   - Civil rights: may change or evolve based on constitutional or legislative amendments within the country according to political and social conditions.
4. Protection and application:
   - Human rights: They are monitored by international bodies and organizations such as the United Nations, and international mechanisms can be resorted to if they are violated.
   - Civil rights: protected and enforced by national institutions and bodies such as the courts and the executive and legislative authorities in Syria.
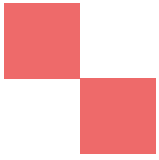
Integration of rights

It is important to note that there is a significant overlap between human rights and civil rights, as many basic human rights are included in national constitutions and laws, making them part of the civil rights of citizens. For example, freedom of expression is an internationally recognized human right that is at the same time a civil right protected under the Syrian constitution.

Dialogue Session: Balancing Peace and Justice in Syria

It is important to note that there is a significant overlap between human rights and civil rights, as many basic human rights are included in national constitutions and laws, making them part of the civil rights of citizens. For example, freedom of expression is an internationally recognized human right that is at the same time a civil right protected under the Syrian constitution.

Introduction (15 minutes)

1. Welcome and Introduction:
   - Provide a brief welcome and introduction to the facilitator.
   - A presentation of the objectives and agenda of the session.
2. Icebreaker activity:
   - A quick activity to help participants get to know each other and feel comfortable. For example, each participant shares their name, role, and first word they remember when they hear peace and justice.
   - The facilitator will write the words and associate them with peace or justice for each participant.

Understanding Peace and Justice (90 minutes)

1. Brief Introduction:
   - Explain

the concepts of peace and justice:
   - Some seek peace to ensure future rights, while others believe that peace can only be achieved through accountability and the guarantee of current rights.
   - The debate can be divided into two parties: one calling for accountability and rights to achieve sustainable peace, and the other calling for peace first to create stability that builds a sustainable solution that respects rights.
     1. Ask participants to choose an aspect of the discussion, you can start with the Force Field tool, and ask participants to stand on (-3.2-1.-2.1-.3.) to demonstrate their support for peace or justice.
     2. Ask people who are on extreme sides to explain why they chose to stand in this place.
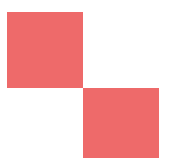
Definition of Peace and Justice:

The icebreaker activity can be linked to and built upon through participants' definitions of peace and justice.

Peace: It does not only mean the absence of war, a concept associated with the instability between at least two people as a result of a state of disagreement, disagreement or conflict, whether at the local level or at larger levels.

As we saw during the last session, some disputes may be at the level of the same institution between a director and an employee, between a father and his son, or between a teacher at the university and a student. In all cases, there is a resulting instability or tension.

Some people avoid conflict and make some concessions in order to achieve relative stability and a sense of peace.

Others feel the desire to confront in order to obtain the right and justice. It does so using its available sources of power to defend that right.

It may come to mind that peace and justice are only concepts related to the state of war, and this may be true, some people may be inclined to stability and peace because they find it the way to achieve stability in institutions that can achieve justice in the future, and that the continuation of chaos will not contribute to accountability and justice.

Others find that justice is a prerequisite for stability and peace. There will be no stability if the individual does not have a sense of justice. This discussion is valid, and the answers may vary among participants depending on their personal perspective. There is no right or wrong in the matter.

Note1

1. In the absence of a distribution of participants on both sides of the field, the facilitator will continue the discussion normally, ask about the reasons for standing in their place, and ask all participants whether the arguments affect his position.

2. We prepare the papers (Peace/ Justice) and ask the participants to withdraw one of the papers to determine the group that will join in the next round.

   a. First Round:
      1. Ask each group to sit together and think about more reasons that support their position
      2. Ask each team to select 3 speakers to participate in the discussion.
      3. Allow 2 minutes per person to participate (2 groups * 3 participants * 2 minutes).
      4. Ask each side of the discussion to meet for 5 minutes and write a final summary based on the discussion to present.
   b. Second round:

1. Ask each group to switch to the other side and try to think of the
2. opposite situation
3. Repeat the discussion using the same settings as before.
4. Ask the following questions to the participants at the end
   - How did you feel when you changed your mind?
   - What were you willing to give up after understanding the
   - opposing group's opinion?
   - What were you not able to concede?

Discussion Questions (60 minutes)

Group Activity:
- Divide participants into groups by age group
- Ask participants to answer the following questions within 30 minutes

1. The first question
   - Can peace and justice be reconciled? If yes, how? If not, what should be the priority? Why?
   - Groups should discuss whether peace and justice can be achieved simultaneously or if one should be a priority over the other.
   - Practical examples and historical contexts should be considered.
2. Second question
   - Suppose peace comes first, what are you willing to give up to achieve peace?
   - Discuss potential concessions and the long-term impact of prioritizing peace over immediate justice.
   - Groups should consider realistic and acceptable sacrifices to achieve the larger goal of peace.
3. View Group Insights (30 minutes)
   - Group Offers:
     ◦ Each group presents the results of its discussion and key points.
     ◦ Facilitates larger discussion to compare ideas and highlight common themes.
4. Formulation of recommendations (30 minutes)
   - Based on the discussions, ask participants to formulate recommendations on how to balance peace and justice in the Syrian context.
   - Recommendations should be practical and take into account the ideas learned from the discussion questions.
5. Conclusion (15 minutes)
   - Share recommendations:
     ◦ Provide recommendations and key points identified by each group.
     ◦ Summarize the main points and thank the participants for their contributions.
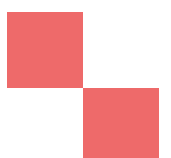
Tools and resources needed

1. Paper and pens for taking notes and drafting recommendations.
2. 2. Large plates or sheets to display results.

Session Objectives:
1. Explore the possibility of reconciling peace and justice.
2. Discuss possible concessions to achieve peace.
3. Identify strengths and power dynamics when defending justice.
4. Formulate practical recommendations to strike a balance between peace and justice.

End
of
session