



EVENT SUMMARY

FINANCING FOR YOUTH-LED PEACEBUILDING AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL: DEFINING AVENUES FOR COORDINATION AND COCREATION FOR IMPACTFUL ACTION

30 January 2023

08:30 a.m. -10:00 a.m. EST

This hybrid session was held at UNICEF Offices, Danny Kaye Conference Room and virtually via Zoom

This discussion has been developed with recognition for the need of an inclusive multi-stakeholder coordination platform for the regular exchange of knowledge on how to improve the quality of financing for youth-led peacebuilding and strengthen the participation of young people, including young women, in peacebuilding financing discussions and decision-making processes. It was organized by the members of the Financing Taskforce of the Global Coalition on YPS, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Finland and Jordan to the United Nations, and gathered representatives of UN member states, the UN system, national governments, and civil society. The discussion started with opening remarks by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Pekka Haavisto, and the Minister of Youth of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Mr. Mohammad Al Nabulsi.

The discussion addressed: **a)** how the donor community can support youth-led peacebuilding efforts by collaborating and coordinating to raise awareness and strengthen existing practices; **b)** concrete approaches such as meaningful inclusion of young peacebuilders in decision-making, exploring nontraditional avenues to enhance and broaden their efforts, and improving the level and quality of financing for youth peacebuilding efforts; and **c)** Concrete next steps by Member States and other stakeholders ensure the successful implementation of these approaches and methodologies.

The following key points emerged from the discussion:

All participants highlighted the long-lasting impact of sustainable and adequately supported leadership of young people in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Young peacebuilders are playing unique roles in peacebuilding processes as mobilisers, as researchers, as campaigners and as community leaders. Uniquely, they foster peer-to-peer peacebuilding action, and given the grassroots nature of many youth-led organizations, they have access to the most vulnerable populations in local communities. In the contexts where young peacebuilders have been supported to lead on their own initiatives (i.e., Somaliland), there is strong evidence of commitment to peace by wider communities as young peacebuilders transition to work as independent experts, and government actors and run their own peacebuilding initiatives. These important, even essential, contributions made by young peacebuilders require sustainable support that takes their unique situations into consideration and helps build the culture of peace in society more broadly.

Participants highlighted the need to expand partnerships with non-traditional donors to meet the gap between peacebuilding financing and the needs of youth-led organizations. While traditional financing through multilateral and bilateral cooperation still represents the largest source of financing for peacebuilding, opportunities exist elsewhere to infuse new funding for youth-focused and youth-led peacebuilding. Networks and platforms such as the Global Coalition Task Force on YPS could be leveraged by promoting collaboration with private sector funders and exploring avenues to increase total allocations to youth-led and youth focused peacebuilding.

Participants also called for flexible, fluid, and quick-access funding channels to ensure accessibility of funding for youth-led initiatives and youth organizations, and explored innovative financing approaches that serve to expand access to funding for youth-led organizations. Some of the options include:

- *Various small grants schemes*, for example, support to organizations in their early stages in order to foster the development of more comprehensive proposals, building capacities of organizations to receive larger funds. For instance, through [GYPI](#) in partnership with [SIDA](#) and [LPI](#) a youth-led organization [SPL](#) in Somalia used a small grant to foster and promote mechanisms for sustainable peace approaches at a country level. Another interesting example from Somalia is [Somaliland SD16+ Coalition](#) that used similar methods to implement social cohesion and youth-led peacebuilding programs. The sustainability of these initiatives has been strengthened through crowd funding, community contribution funds and land donations. Additionally, flexible funding practices from UNOY to Youth For Peace International in India allowed YPI to use a 6 month sub grant to fundraise and sustain the project for an additional two years.
- *Participatory grantmaking*, where young peacebuilders design funding schemes for other young peacebuilders, produce financing mechanisms that are responsive to the needs and priorities of youth. Examples like the [Global Resilience Fund](#) and [FRIDA](#) which combined the resources of funders from a diverse range of institutions, including philanthropies, INGOs, multi-laterals, and bi-lateral agencies, counteract the narrative that these models are too slow or inefficient to distribute large amounts of resources. While models for participatory funding already exist, they require partnership between donors, including through pooled funding models, to spread implementation and accessibility.
- Investment through *intermediary networks and organizations*, which can handle the bureaucratic and regulatory requirements of large donors, can facilitate access to bilateral funds for youth-led organizations. For instance, networks such as [GPPAC](#), [UNOY](#) , [Purposeful](#) and

INGOs such as [Peace Direct](#) have all successfully worked as platforms to enable bilateral funding to reach youth-led organizations. Purposeful has been able to distribute aid to unregistered organizations, often without bank accounts, by using other approaches such as Paypal and Western Union. Pooled funds can help donors share risk in order to demonstrate the operational bravery necessary to resource the most marginalized young populations.

- However, participants cautioned that these intermediary partnerships must be rigorously evaluated to ensure equal and authentic partnership with youth-led organizations. Additionally, participants identified the importance of networks as an important conduit to increase accessibility of bilateral aid to youth-led organizations through informal networking events. UNOY indicated these networks can be important to adapt funding to the diverse organizational structures which youth-led groups employ.

Speakers highlighted that holistic and impactful peacebuilding requires integrated, cross-government approaches that are risk tolerant, sustainable and predictable. National action plans which coordinate strategy and financing across agencies and ministries facilitate sustained ownership for youth-led peacebuilding and investment in young people. Both Jordan and Finland highlighted their National Action Plans, identifying the importance of early and sustained collaboration with youth as well as concrete implementation and sustained funding. Integration of YPS into UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks was highlighted as an important tool for sustained funding. UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and DPPA-PBSO emphasized the need to improve communication and develop coalitions, making the case to those outside of the peacebuilding financing sphere that peacebuilding investment and conflict-sensitive approaches can deliver results for them too. For example, the PBSO Impact Hub initiative provides evidence-based approaches for all donors—including non-traditional, non-DAC donors—to increase time horizons, risk tolerance, and flexible funding for local peacebuilding efforts of women and youth; coherence within governments and across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus; and partnership financing mechanisms that integrate conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. Similarly, participants called for regional bodies including the Arab League to serve as a venue to build an evidence base for existing best practices.

The session acknowledged the effort being made by Member States, UN agencies and other stakeholders in advancing the financing for peacebuilding within the YPS agenda, including key national examples of prioritizing trust in young people as key actors and co-creators for peace. Member State representatives of the Dominican Republic, Jordan, El Salvador, Finland, Kenya, and Sweden encouraged national commitments to the YPS agenda, and dedicated strategies, resources & funds through innovative approaches. At the global level, Jordan called for Member States to reinvigorate the Group of Friends of YPS.

Session presenters called for greater efforts to increase the visibility of the work done by young peacebuilders—placing their needs, perspectives and experiences at the core of strategies for financing peacebuilding and prevention. They hoped that the models and perspectives shared during this event offer pathways towards concrete commitments to implement the language agreed to in the recently adopted General Assembly Resolution on Financing for Peacebuilding (A/RES/76/305).

The participants also raised the need for and interest in continuing coordination and learning among various stakeholders. The impact of young peacebuilders' work is not adequately understood by the donor community, and the mechanisms for participatory decision-making remain weak. Therefore, continuous exchange of learning among different partners, within and outside the traditional peacebuilding space, can help strengthen existing mechanisms of support for young peacebuilders and their work, as well as creating opportunities for more coordination among donors that enables stronger impact of action, avoids overlap and ensures “best value for money.”