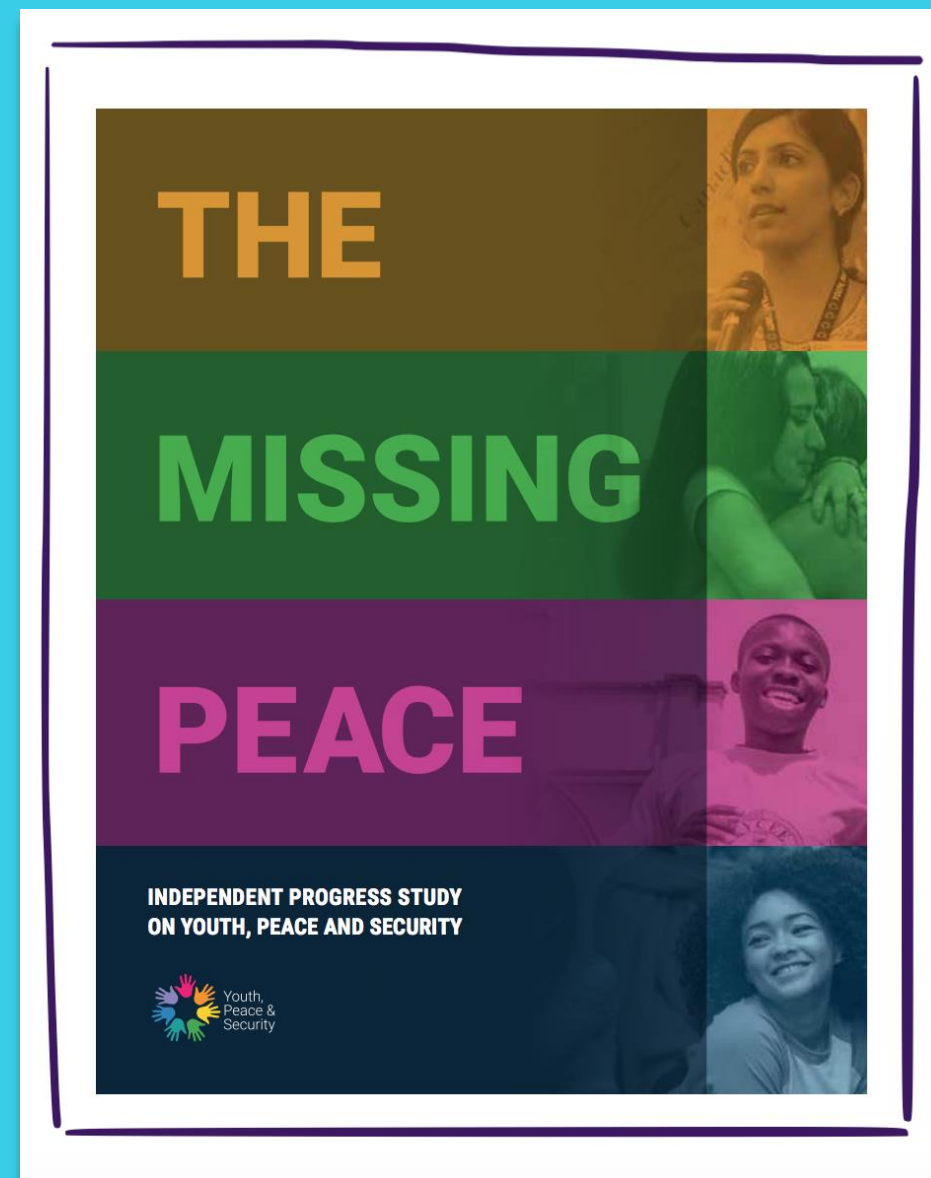


2nd of July: Youth involvement in institutional efforts in the field of youth, peace and security

The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth Peace and Security

By Eliška Jelínková -Board member at Youth Peace Ambassadors Network and Co chair of YPS wg at the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict



Quick summary





**281 FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSIONS IN 44
COUNTRIES**



**7 REGIONAL AND 5
NATIONAL
CONSULTATIONS**



**27 COUNTRY-
FOCUSED STUDIES**



**19 THEMATIC
SUBMISSIONS FROM
PARTNERS**



**5 ONLINE THEMATIC
CONSULTATIONS**



**A GLOBAL SURVEY
OF YOUTH LED CIVIL
SOCIETY
PEACEBUILDING
ORGANIZATIONS**



**MAPPING EXERCISES
OF INTERVENTIONS
BY MEMBER STATES
AND UNITED
NATIONS ENTITIES
FOCUSED ON
YOUNG PEOPLE IN
RELATION TO PEACE
AND SECURITY**

HOW THE DATA WAS GATHERED

Violence of exclusion



Experiences of exclusion as a form of structural and psychological violence that is indivisible from young people's political, social, cultural and economic disempowerment.



Characterized by mistrust by young people of state-society relations and by mistrust of young people by their communities and wider society.

Frustrations expressed in the study

“Even if you make the effort to change, society gives you an eternal tattoo, a label of an offender, a failure or a source of problems.”

“We young people are only called up when it’s time to wave flags or put up posters. When we want to share proposals, they don’t take us into account and when we voice criticism we are sidelined.”

“Our society has made us to believe that we lack knowledge, are ignorant of political processes, and cannot engage in constructive peacemaking without the involvement of older people or politicians. We are excluded from local decision-making. We are always struggling to find an avenue where we can prove our worth, experiment with new ideas or participate in the wider political process.”

“Trust is a key challenge as we are perceived as children who are not able to make things evolve and change. But without young people working on peace and security, the decision makers will not understand our needs. Young people need to be taken seriously and held responsible on their [youth-led] projects.”

“In my country, most youth become violent because of their frustration. Poverty is not the only issue; unemployment can lead to that, but to me the most important thing that can make young people frustrated is when they are not recognized and they can’t express their views and opinions.”

Tackling myths about young people

Myths:

- Rebels/troublemakers
- Violence perpetrators
- Unskilled and uneducated
- Politically apathetic

Reality:

- Social innovators/peacebuilders
- Vast majority of young people remain non violent
- Educated and skilled but can't find work opportunities especially those most marginalized.
- Excluded from politics or actively withdrawn from political systems due to lack of trust

It's all about framing! Which stories are more prevalent in mainstream media- young people as active peacebuilders or violent perpetrators/troublemakers?

Youth engagement in peace work

- Engaging in all phases of peace and conflict: prevention, humanitarian, on-going and post-conflict
- Bridging development, human rights, humanitarian, and peace and security
- Operating at every level: peer to peer, family, community, national, regional, international
- Responding to different types of violence: violent extremism, political conflict, organized criminal violence, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.
- Collaborating with diverse partners: local and national governments, community leaders, media, cultural organizations, justice, police, other peacebuilding organizations

What should meaningful youth participation and inclusion look like?

- There is **no one solution fits all**. Different possibilities in different contexts and at different levels.
- Political inclusion must be **legitimate and meaningful**.
- “Participation” and “Inclusion” are **not unconditional**: they cannot be a form of co-optation or tokenism where young people are used or manipulated by others.
- Mainstreaming of youth policies.
- More representative youth councils that are directly connected to national parliaments and other decision making bodies.
- Various and interrelated peacebuilding “tracks”:
 - grassroots community-level engagements
 - civil society involvement
 - formal political processes and peace negotiations.

Recommendations in the Progress study

- a framework for action within which young people, governments, multilateral organizations, civil society and other actors can work together to support young people's innovation and resilience, and build sustainable peace
- 3 ways: Include, Invest, Partner
- The systems that reinforce exclusion must be transformed to address the structural barriers limiting meaningful youth inclusion and participation in peace and security.

Some recommendations related to youth inclusion in peace and other political processes

- Invest in the leadership of young women and men working on peace and security, recognizing that young leaders are not only in youth-led organizations but also embedded in communities and other organizations working on peace and security.
- Institutionalize measures to close the gap between the youth population and the representation of youth in local and national governance institutions and processes by adopting youth quotas; establishing youth advisory boards and councils, and youth adviser roles; and facilitating young people's access to elected positions by aligning the age of eligibility to run for office with the voting age
- Quotas for the direct and gender-equitable participation of young people in all phases of formal peace and political transition processes, from pre-negotiation to implementation, including in national dialogues, constitution-making, transitional justice and other political processes related to peace and security and youth advisory boards.

My findings

- The Progress study presents a much broader understanding of inclusivity in the peace and security field.
- Strong emphasis on gender equality and representation of youth from marginalized groups i.e. refugees, rural, disabled, LGBTQ+ youth.
- Break down of long held binary portrayal of young men as violence perpetrators and young women as passive victims.
- Showcases many examples from all over the world of peacebuilding work countering negative stereotypes.
- Concrete recommendations for specific issues and stakeholders based on young people's lived experiences and their needs.

In conclusion

- Young people are the biggest stakeholders when it comes to their future. They should decide what it will look like.
- Recognize young people's contributions. They are already agents for peace.
- Youth shouldn't be on the table, but around the table. Let's redesign it.