

United Nations Resolutions on Youth and Peacebuilding

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Abstract

The current total population of the world today is 7.837 billion and 1.2 billion from the age of 15-24 years of age are youth. Considering this number, youth are vulnerable to conflict either directly or indirectly. The study has also shown that when it comes to conflict resolution youth are most time marginalized. This paper aims to prove that the inclusion of youth in peacebuilding would reduce conflict and promote peaceful coexistence. Furthermore, the demographic argument in this paper is probably one of the most compelling reasons for recognising the role of youth in peacebuilding and building peace. Therefore, UN Resolution 2250 in December 2015, is significant because it finally puts youth at the centre of progressions of peacebuilding and policies for the sustainable progress of peace and security. This paper is unique because it points out the unprecedented resolution for different reasons. First, it is the first time that the UNSC has adopted a thematic resolution dealing comprehensively with youth in issues related to peace and security. Second, UNSC recognises young people's role in promoting peace, transforming conflicts, and preventing violence. In this resolution, youth are not considered only as a group to be protected, nor as a group to be protected from, but are rather considered as actors for positive change in their communities, recognizing their role as catalysts for peace and actors in preventing violence. The paper recommends that the resolution demands to give voice to young people in peace processes, urging governments, private and public entities, and civil society and institutions-including UN agencies to provide both the tools and the necessary funding to transform the text into real policies and specific projects. Finally, the paper adopts descriptive and content analysis pedagogy.

Keywords: youth, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, United Nations, communities.



Introduction

Young people and youth-led organizations can and do play a critical role in building and sustaining peace. The Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda, catalyzed by the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions, aims to recognize and support young people in broader efforts to build peaceful and inclusive societies. Young people make up a significant proportion of the population in conflict-affected and fragile settings, yet despite growing commitments to the YPS agenda, their role and contributions are often not prioritized in peacebuilding and prevention approaches. Therefore, ensuring adequate financing has been a central concern for the YPS agenda since its inception. Yet so far discussions on how to improve the quantity and quality of resources have been fairly limited.¹

The UN Secretary General's first Report on Youth, Peace, and Security in 2020 noted that despite some progress inadequate resourcing and data are still major challenges. This report which echoes these findings, uses available quantitative and qualitative evidence from UN and civil society sources to delve deeper into recent trends, challenges, and opportunities to better finance the role of young people in peacebuilding and prevention of conflicts where they are prone to be.² Its goal is to aid policymakers and other stakeholders in identifying key areas where more action is needed to make concrete progress. The paper is divided into five main sections as stated below.

A Brief History of UN and UNSC

Representatives of 50 nations met on 25 April 1945 in San Francisco to write a document that, it was hoped, would guide the world to an era of peace and well-being. As the United Nations Conference on International Organization opened, the reek of war was fresh but hope for the future surged among the people of the nearly victorious Allied states. The conference debated and eventually approved the charter of the United Nations and thus the creation of a new world conference.³

However, novel the statement at San Francisco may have wanted their handiwork to appear, familiar difficulties and specific historical baggage accompanied them. During the next six decades, these difficulties remained while new ones arose. Yet the San Francisco Charter has endured almost as it

¹ This the forum where the world body met and discussed the role roles of the youths and young people in ensuring peace and security. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 (2015)

² It is very pertinent to involve the youths and young adult in policy-making because they are the vulnerable or serves as tools in the hands of the actors to achieve their end desires. Yvonne Kemper., 'Youth in War-to-Peace Transitions: Approaches of International Organizations', Berghof Report No. 10, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005.

³ This is the conference held after the Second World War by the BIG THREE as they were popular called. The mission is to decide the new world order after the war, and form a body that will control the affairs of the states. Check for the book at home

was drafted, while the organization based on it resisted, bent, rebounded, and adjusted to the turbulent political current that the characteristic of international relations. This paper deals mainly with the fate of the organization created in San Francisco. But the United Nations, if it is to be clearly understood, must be set against the background of international politics and the history of the international organization.

Although the conference claimed to speak in the name of 'WE, the peoples of the United Nations.' Its participants acted on behalf of governments. In turn, these governments represented states—those legal and political abstractions for social structures within which people are governed. In some states, the people or their elected representatives can change the government or even the national constitution. Within others, woe befalls those who even breathe a criticism of governmental policy. In treating each other, most governments pretend that they rule in their states without the slightest responsibility to others unless they specifically undertake it. Each state is said to be sovereign and independent. The UN Charter faithfully reflects this assertion.⁴

If each state is sovereign and independent, then the New World Organisation could not be a government. Nor did the San Francisco Conference leave any doubt on this point. Yet the new United Nations was mandated to produce and supervise some order in the world, to foster welfare, and very specifically to maintain peace and security.

The Roles of African Regional Organisations in Conflict Resolution

Regional and sub-regional organisations play a key role in conflict resolution, primarily in their areas of jurisdiction. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have intervened fruitfully in Liberia, Chad, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Darfur, Burundi, Sudan, etc. be sure, the successes recorded in AU interventions in Africa would have been impossible without support from the US, the European Union, the UNSC as well as the Troika countries U.S., Britain and Norway.⁵ In other words, more successes have been recorded when extra-African bodies supported intervention initiatives by the AU and sub-regional bodies in Africa. Examples of such cooperation happened when ECOWAS intervened in Liberia and during the AU-UN hybrid operation in Darfur.⁶

Without a doubt, the definitive resolution of conflicts in Africa will require extensive cooperation between the UN and the AU as well as all sub-regional organisations on the continent. This is because most sub-regional organisations

⁴Nick Lewer., 'International Non-Government Organisations and Peacebuilding – Perspectives from Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, Working Paper 3, October 1999.

⁵Coning, C. The Role of the OAU in conflict management in Africa, Monograph No.10 conflict management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. 197

⁶Thomas, E. Against the Gathering Storm. Securing Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement. (London: Chatham House, 2009), 6. <http://www.dfa.gov.za/contact.htm>. Accessed October 17 2022.

lack the diplomatic, professional, logistic, and financial capacity to solely intervene in these conflicts without external support. Against this backdrop, the next section discusses the roles of sub-regional organisations in Africa in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was established in 1983. Its membership comprises the following countries: Angola, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome. The body's primary objective is to establish a uniform customs regime among member states. The body is comprised of a Conference of Heads of State and Government, a Council of Ministers, a Court of Justice, a General Secretariat, and a Consultative Commission as well as Technical Committees. However, it was ineffective from its inception and was only revitalised in 1999.⁷

In 2000 ECCAS imposed a mutual assistance pact on itself, urging member states to support one another militarily. Also in 2000, ECCAS adopted a protocol on Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (COPAX), stressing sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs as guiding principles while also advocating confidence-building measures and common approaches to addressing the issues of refugees and internally displaced persons, transitional crime and arms trafficking. The outcome of its summit in 2002 was to establish a Defense and Security Commission (DSC), a Central Africa Multinational Force (FOMAC), and an Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC). The functions of FAMAC include ensuring inter-service cooperation and supporting police/gendarmerie contingents and civilian modules up to the size of three brigades with appropriate naval and air support. FAMAC is also responsible for observing and monitoring ceasefires, as well as managing preventive deployment while ensuring peacekeeping, enforcement of sanctions, and humanitarian interventions on behalf of the AU and the UN.⁸

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development was founded in 1996 based on the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and Drought (IGADD) which was formally launched in 1986. IGAD member states are Djibouti, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan. IGAD runs on the principle of sovereign equality of member states and the need for consensus in decision-making through a two-thirds majority in the Council of Ministers. IGAD's initial objective was based on economics, i.e., how to resolve the drought challenges in East Africa. However, it later focused on the goal of promoting peace and stability in the region, by creating mechanisms for conflict resolution,

⁷ECCAS. Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States (1983). http://iss.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/eccas/eccastreaty.pdf. Accessed October 17 2022.

⁸ECCAS 2000 'Standing Orders of the Defence and Security Commission' http://www.iss.co.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/eccas/dsceng.pdf. Accessed October 17 2022.

prevention, and management as well as how to settle those displaced by civil war. The organisation also urged member states to consider settling disputes within the sub-region by themselves before seeking help from the international community.

The need for IGAD intervention in the Sudanese and Somalia peace processes was a major reason for transforming its modus operandi. IGAD subsequently played a critical role between the GoS and the SPLM/A. It established a permanent secretariat, appointing special envoys and hosting negotiations between the two parties/actors. IGAD's first achievement was the 2002 Machakos Protocol which highlighted the modalities of power-sharing between Northern Sudan and Southern Sudan. It also played a key part in the granting of autonomy to the South from 2005 to 2011, when an election for secession was conducted in January 2011 and over ninety-eight percent voted for secession in the South. Indeed, IGAD featured prominently in the prolonged negotiations which produced a series of protocols culminating in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).⁹

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) Approaches to Conflict Resolution/Peacekeeping

The AMU was founded in 1989 by Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, and Algeria. It aims to contribute to preserving peace based on justice and equity. However, the AMU has not recorded any major success and has failed to have a summit since 1994, most likely due to the unending dispute between Morocco and Algeria over Western Sahara. Other objectives of the AMU include safeguarding regional economic interests, fostering and promoting commerce and cultural cooperation, and intensifying mutual economic exchanges. The organisation believes that cooperation on those levels will promote integration among member states and help to build a common North African market in the Maghreb. The AMU also seeks to promote common defense and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.¹⁰

Southern African Development Community (SADC) Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping

The Southern African Development Community was founded in 1992 via the merging of two sub-regional organisations, i.e. the Frontline States and the Southern African Development Cooperation Conference. South Africa became a member in 1994, Mauritius in 1995, both the DRC and Seychelles in 1998, and Madagascar in 2005. Seychelles left the organisation from 1997 to 2004 and returned in 2008.

SADC aims to promote interdependence and integration, the sovereign equality of member states, solidarity, peace, human rights, and democracy. It is also officially committed to collective defence, hence the signing in 2003 of a Mutual

⁹Baraza, L. W. *A case study the InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in Somalia*. Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi.

¹⁰Coning, C. *The Role of the OAU in conflict management in Africa*, Monograph No.10 conflict management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. 197

Defence Pact which mandates member states to help one another in cases of external attack. In 1998 SADC sent troops from Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to protect the DRC's Laurent Kabila against Rwandan and Ugandan forces. Also in 1998, South Africa and Botswana intervened in Lesotho to stop a military coup.¹¹

UN-AU and ECOWAS Conflict Management and Peacekeeping in West Africa

There has been cooperation between the UN and African regional organisations in terms of conflict resolution on the continent, especially between the UN and AU/ECOWAS about peacekeeping and peacebuilding during and after the conflict in African states. For example, in 1981, the OAU (now AU) deployed its first military mission to Chad to end the civil war, although that mission ultimately failed due to inadequate financial and logistical resources. In another intervention, the OAU facilitated peace talks which led to the redeploying of a Neutral Military Observer Group to Rwanda which was later taken over by the UNSC. The impact of the UN was also significant in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict of 2000, the Burundi conflict of 2003-2004, and the Somalia conflict of 2007, to mention but a few.

The UN has also co-deployed with the AU and ECOWAS in many conflicts in Africa. For example, the AU-UN hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was unique in terms of the mode of cooperation between the UN and the OAU. Normally, the AU and ECOWAS would deploy first and the UN would eventually take over full responsibility for any mission. However, despite extensive mediation activities by the AU and ECOWAS, previous cooperation between these organisations and the UN has focused mainly on peacekeeping. Since 1995, the UN has made a series of efforts to broaden the scope of these relationships and clarify the roles of each party. While underlining the UN's control over the maintenance of international peace and security, several high-level and thematic meetings with regional organisations, Security Council debates and key documents/reports and resolutions have affirmed the vital role of regional organisations in peace and security and made recommendations aimed at ensuring more effective cooperation between them and the UN.¹²

However, it is worth observing that the role of sub-regional organisations in peacemaking and conflict resolution in Africa gained momentum only in the last two decades. Generally, the AU has been working with the sub-regional organisations and has played a major role in peacekeeping and conflict

¹¹SADC 1992. 'Treaty of the Southern African Development Community.' www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/119. Accessed October 17 2022. And Likoti, F. J., The 198 Military Intervention in Lesotho: SADC peace mission or resource war? *International Peacekeeping*. (2007), 251-263.

¹²Oliver Richmond, 'Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: Liberal-Local Hybridity via every day as a Response to the Paradoxes of Liberal Peacebuilding', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3, no.3 (2009): 331, and ECCAS. Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States (1983). http://iss.za/AF/RegOrg/unity_to_union/pdfs/eccas/eccastreaty.pdf. Accessed October 17 2022.

resolution in Africa as exemplified by the role played by ECOWAS in peacemaking and conflict resolution in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS has restored democratic government in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. On its part, SADC has ensured peace in Lesotho and Mozambique. In Sudan, IGAD facilitated the CPA of 2005 which resolved the protracted Sudanese crisis. The regional approach to peacemaking and security became necessary because of the tendency of African conflicts to spiral far beyond their origins. Considerable progress has been achieved in building Africa's sub-regional capacity for managing violent conflicts and addressing security threats on the continent.¹³

Theoretical Considerations

Community Youth Development Theory

This theory highlights the importance of strengthening communities so that they can be functional in nurturing and supporting young people, thus ensuring sustainable development (Benson & Pittman, 2001:9; Villaruel, Perkins, Borden & Keith, 2003:2). In this context, the emphasis is on empowering and developing youth, so that they will, in turn, contribute positively to the development of the communities that have built them (Lerner, Brentano, Dowling & Anderson, 2002:28). This will contribute to cohesive communities.¹⁴

Various authors indicated that the way to improve the lives of individual young people is to improve the communities in which they live and to make them better places (Jarvis, Sheer & Hughes, 1997:722; Villaruel et al., 2003:2). Therefore, this theory attempts to involve young people in the improvement of their lives and their development as well as that of their communities. In that regard, asset-rich communities are seen to be giving young people the resources needed to build and pursue healthy lives that make a productive contribution to self, family, and community (Lerner et al., 2002:28). Therefore, the assumption that "healthy communities will nurture and support healthy families and individuals" holds some truth (Villaruel et al., 2003:2). It is for these reasons that this study sees young people as underutilised resources in their communities (Wheeler, 2000:11).¹⁵

The community youth development theory attempts to highlight the importance of changing the environment (community) within which young people live. This could be achieved by significantly involving them to participate in the development process for their good as well as that of their communities (Benson and Pittman, 2001:9; Hahn and Raley, 1998:389; Wheeler, 2000:11).

¹³Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

¹⁴Benson & Pittman, (2001), Moving the youth development message: Turning a vague idea into a moral imperative in P.L. Benson and K.U. Pittman (Eds) Trends in Youth development visions, realities, and challenges. Pp. vii and xii. Norwell M.A. Kluwer Academic. And Villaruel, Perkins, Borden & Keith, (2003), Community Youth Development Practice, Policy and Research. Thousand, Oaks, C.A. Sage.

¹⁵Jarvis, Sheer & Hughes, 1997:722; Villaruel et al., 2003. The various authors that had researched extensively on the youth can be of positive benefits to the community if the government in power makes adequate provisions in the society. Other authors have likewise stated above whose intellectual work falls in this circle.

The utilisation of the strengths of an individual and the community will lead to a direct process of change (Benson, 2002:124). In addition, the community youth development theory views Youth work as part of community development and reform (Broadbent, 2006:52). Converging youth and community development is necessary, taking into account factors that have weakened the African value of interdependence once available to young people by substituting them with the western value of individualism (Arnett, 2001 in African Union Commission, 2010:17).

Thus, the changes are attributed to factors such as changed community structures (e.g., nuclear versus extended family); changed cultural practices (e.g., collectivism versus individualism); changed family circumstances (e.g., working parents, disorganisation in families). According to Van Kampen, Beker, and Wilbrink-Griffioen (1996:54),¹⁶ these changes have an impact on the nature and content of young people's development, how they react to available opportunities and services, and their position in society. Further, the function of the community reinforcing the socialization role of the family, could also be affected (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001d:15).¹⁷

The implication is that young people would no longer have the same support from their communities as they used to have in the past. Evidently with these changes, the role of Youth worker could be that of ensuring that both changed structures and practices, respond to the needs of young people (South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:12).¹⁸ In this case, the Youth workers' role could be that of creating an enabling environment within which young people could thrive by ensuring that they acquire personal and social assets to strengthen themselves, their community support structures, and to consequently assisting them to adapt to the changing environment. The additional Youth workers' role would also be that of inculcating a sense of historical continuity by assisting youth to remain connected to their communities through understanding how they came to be who, what, and where they are now (Krauss and Suandi, 2008:12).¹⁹

This emphasis on working with youth and communities as partners in effecting changes within the systems will empower both parties whilst fostering continuous engagements and connections which are supposed to be of mutual benefit (Broadbent, 2006:53; South African Youth Workers Association, 2001:12; Krauss & Strauss, 2008:12).²⁰ Therefore, communities must commit to

¹⁶Van Kampen, Beker, and Wilbrink-Griffioen, (1996), Background report to the OECD-project

Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy, Ministry of Health, Welfare & Sport. Ministry of Education, Culture & Science. The Hague, The Netherlands.

¹⁷Commonwealth Secretariat, UNESCO (1998). *Citizenship Education for the 21st Century*. New York, NY:UNESCO <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/process-criteria>.

¹⁸SADC 1992. 'Treaty of the Southern African Development Community' www.sadc.int/index/browse/page/119. Accessed October 17 2022. And Likoti, F. J., The 198 Military Intervention in Lesotho: SADC peace mission or resource war? *International Peacekeeping*. (2007), 251-263.

¹⁹Krauss, S. E. and Suandi, T, (2008), The potential of youth workers as facilitators of values formation and development. Commonwealth youth and development. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC30885>

²⁰ The contributions of these authors have been cited previously.

making youth development a priority for their time, resources, and policy initiatives (Villaruel et al., 2003:389). Similarly, young people in communities must also have a moral orientation to sustain future generations as well as a society marked by social justice, equity, democracy, and a world wherein all young people may thrive (Lerner et al., 2002:22).²¹ As a result, the emphasis of this theory is on assisting young people to see value in a caring society; and for society to see the value of investing in youth (Peteru, 2008:33).²²

The role of youth in conflict

More than 400 million young people, between the age of 15 and 29, live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts across the globe. This means that more than 400 million young people experience violence, face exploitation, miss out on education, and struggle to survive.

Amidst such challenges, young people have shown that they can play an active role, particularly at grassroots and local levels, as peacemakers, mediators, and peacebuilders. Such roles are as follows:

- Build social cohesion and trust across different groups;
- Open channels and spaces for youth from across diverse backgrounds to work together and build a shared vision of a peaceful world;
- Advocate for human rights and against violence in any form;
- Support the reintegration of young ex-combatants and the healing of multiple traumas of affected communities;
- Strengthen the capacities and skills of their peers; and
- Advocate for youth and gender-inclusive peace negotiations and processes.²³

Yet, young people continue to face significant barriers to inclusion, support, and acknowledgment in peace processes. This limits their ability to play a meaningful role in shaping efforts to promote the cessation of or prevent a return to, violent conflict, as well as to contribute to building lasting peace in their contexts.

The potential for youth to contribute to peace-making and peacebuilding was recognised with the adoption of Resolution 2250 by the United Nations Security Council in 2015. As one of the five pillars of the UN's Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda, this included a commitment to ensuring the participation of young people in conflict prevention and resolution, violence prevention, and the promotion of social cohesion. Seizing the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the

²¹Lerner et al, (2002), Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contributions of Fifth-Grade Adolescents Findings from the First Wave Of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. February 2005 *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 25(1):17-71

²²Peteru, P. S. 2008. Youth development: a Pacific context. *Commonwealth Youth and Development* 6 (1), 23--35. <https://doi.org/10.25159/1727-7140/1608>

²³UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009). *The Right of the Child to be Heard*. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf>. Youth, Peace and Security: a programming handbook

latest YPS Resolution (Resolution 2535), which was adopted in July 2020, our aim in this article is to explore the challenges that young people continue to face in their work towards peace and what can be done to support their important contribution to peace processes. We do so by drawing on the findings of a project, *Youth-Led Peace*, we carried out at the University of Glasgow during 2020-21.

Youth as Peacebuilders

The positioning of youth in society has a bearing on their leadership potential and their possible role in peacebuilding. The tension between young and old has been one of the key features of inter-generational shifts about the control over power, resources, and people. The tension lies in the palpable impatience of youth, their desire to strive for more, their willingness to be seen as responsible and capable, and the structural barriers to their social mobility. Independence from others and responsibility for others, such as taking care of a family or household, can be seen as defining markers of prerequisites of social adulthood. In this sense, dependency, exclusion, and social or political marginalization become prominent sources of the social contest. At the same time, it should be recognised that such societal dynamics, challenges, and opportunities vary across different cultural contexts whether it is in Africa, Europe, Asia, or Latin America.

Within the challenging fluidity of post-conflict environments, which are nothing but contexts where the politics of war continue through different means, the young would need to show great 'navigational skills' to respond to such power dynamics. Their social, political, and economic navigation is about their identity transformation as well as the negotiation or re-negotiation of societal norms, values, and structures so that they can find a voice and place in the emerging structures of post-conflict environments.

What needs to be underlined is that youth should be conceptualized and studied as agents of positive peace in terms of addressing not only the challenges of physical violence, but also the challenges of structural and cultural violence, and the broader social change processes to transform violent, oppressive and hierarchical structures, as well as behaviour, relationships, and attitudes into more participatory and inclusive ones.

The key point to remember is that without recognizing youths as political actors, their trajectories in peacebuilding would likely be ignored, wasted, and at best, under-utilized. To recognize their agency as a political actor in peacebuilding, there needs to be a comprehensive understanding of their conflict trajectories, and this is particularly important for those young people who have taken direct participation in an armed conflict as combatants. To understand the engagement of youth in peacebuilding, first of all, the youth mobilization and reintegration factors such as who they are, what they did before the conflict, how they were recruited, what specific fighting roles they undertook, what they experienced physically, socio-economically and psychologically, during the armed conflict, and what 'home' context they will be reintegrating into will all be critical for the youth's trajectories in peacebuilding.

Second, the involvement of youth in non-violent politics, and from a wider perspective, the enablement of their political agency in a more positive and peace-oriented role in post-conflict environments, is likely to depend on how these trajectories are shaped by the overall political and governance context. Third, the enablement of youth as active agents in peacebuilding cannot be considered without considering such challenges they tend to face due to the armed conflict such as the loss of education, a lack of employable skills, and the destruction of a stable family environment. The wider socio-economic needs of youths are often ignored in post-conflict contexts as they are not seen as a 'vulnerable' group.

Fourth, it is important to provide youths with training opportunities to take an active part in peacebuilding. With their youthful energy and capabilities, and ability to adapt to new technological trends, for example, youths could act as mediators, community mobilisers, humanitarian workers, and peace brokers. Like any particular conflict-affected population group, the mobilisation of youths' capacities requires a targeted and long-term approach. At the Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations, an annual event called Global Peace Workshop is held in Turkey every year. Around 70-80 young participants from across the world get together in this one-week training, networking, and solidarity event, and it is incredible to see the transformation of those young people in such a short period as peacebuilders and start undertaking a wide range of peacebuilding projects in their communities, schools, and workplaces.

Fifth, the engagement of youth in peacebuilding in a wider perspective can be ensured through the arts, culture, tourism, sports, and education. The innovativeness and creativeness of young people in those areas could be mobilised effectively by connecting them with wider peacebuilding objectives such as building bridges between divided communities and ensuring a viable process of reconciliation. There are samples across the world of the contributions that the young make towards peacebuilding such as the strengthening of community cohesion and reconciliation in South Sudan, civic awareness for peaceful social relations and development events in Nepal, transparent events across different ethno religious groups in Sri Lanka, and community entrepreneurship and up to date events in Burundi. Furthermore, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development Report entitled 'Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding.

Finally, in undertaking all of these objectives it is also pivotal to avoid the well-known cliché of referring to youths as the 'future leaders. Leadership should not be considered as a factor of age and providing appropriate governance contexts would likely enable young people to flourish as leaders today. In other words, they need to be treated as leaders today without postponing it to an elusive future whether it is in governance in general or peacebuilding programmes specifically.

To achieve this objective there have recently been several critical developments such as the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security of December 2015 which makes a clear recognition of the positive contributions of youth to peace and sets an overall framework to support their efforts. In May

2016, the UN Peacebuilding Fund started its first Youth Promotion Initiative, which could play a role in encouraging youth leadership in peacebuilding. Therefore, the current trends show that there will be many more similar youth leadership programmes across the world shortly, but the key point for their successes will depend on whether or not such initiatives can also respond to wider socio-economic, cultural and political barriers that young people face in their quest of becoming an active agent of positive change, peacebuilding, and reconciliation.

Resolution 2250 is historic based on the fact that it finally positions the youth as the masterpieces of the processes and policies for the sustainable development of peace and security. This is an important strategy for various reasons. To begin, it is the first time that the UN Security Council adopted a thematic resolution dealing in totality with youth in issues related to peace and security. Furthermore, the policy document gives the youth a cogent role to play in their potential and ability to promote peace, transform conflict, and prevent violence in their localities. On this platform of conflict resolution, youth are not considered only as a group to be protected nor as a group to be protected from conflict and violence but are both rather considered as actors for positive change in their societies, identifying their role as catalysts for peace and actors in preventing violence.

The resolution demands to give voice to young people in peace processes, urging governments, private organisations, and high-profile personalities to be the reason UNSC was formed and make public. What made the world body pass such a resolution 2250 by providing tools and necessary funding to transform the text into real policies?

Conclusion

It is a common belief that youths are the bedrock of a nation. The fact remains that if these teeming youths are adequately used, they are capable of developing the nation to an enviable stage or if they are neglected, they can turn to be a thorn in the flesh. Also, this paper has examined the potential of the youth and why the UNSC has to create a space in which youth can play when it comes to conflict resolution. UNSC 2215 is a treaty signed by member nations where the importance of youth is adequately recognized. If this potential is implemented at various levels, the strength that they use for destruction will be converted for nations building in all ramifications.

Recommendations

While the international and national youth, peace, and security agendas have supported progress in youth inclusion in peace processes, much work remains to be done to address the challenges we outline above and to fully acknowledge youth as agents of change. Our key recommendations to move forward towards more inclusive peace processes include:

1. Develop equal partnerships with youth organisations to support youth-led and youth-owned peace initiatives and represent young people in decision-making processes at all levels.
2. Set up and support platforms for youth to represent their voices and experiences and partner with each other to work towards peace.
3. Create safe online and face-to-face spaces for youth to work together, learn from each other, and receive support and training from peers and more senior experts. This should include access to mental health support to help them deal with any trauma they may have.
4. Ensure a sustained provision of funds, technical resources, and guidance to support youth-led peace initiatives of different types.
5. Facilitate youth's capacity building relevant to their individual and contextual needs to ensure they can design, initiate, and complete successful peace initiatives and confidently participate in peace processes.

The recommendations that have emerged from our research require a drastic change in mindset from many people within local, national, and international spheres, especially persons in authority. It is worth noting that several of the recommendations apply to the inclusion of many underrepresented groups in peace processes and are not specific to youth, such as women, Indigenous peoples, minorities, refugees, and internally displaced people.

However, the tendency to ignore youth and to consider the younger generations as prone to violence and radicalisation has presented unique challenges to youth inclusivity in peace processes and requires tailored pathways for change. The world is missing out on a significant by not investing sufficiently in young people's agency in peace processes and beyond.