EVIDENCE FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY

A CASE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY LEGISLATION

A Summary of "The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security"[1]

SEPTEMBER **2019**

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Youth,
Peace &
Security

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INTRODUCTION: THE URGENCY & OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY (YPS)

The world is experiencing a 30-year high in violent conflict. Battle deaths worldwide have increased by 340% in the last 10 years. Nearly 70 million people remain displaced, 90% of whom are fleeing violence, war, and persecution. The conflict management systems built to maintain peace and security after World War II are struggling to manage contemporary conflict. Despite the $14.8 trillion that goes into violence containment annually,[2] violence and violent conflict continue to result in massive human suffering, reverse development, and erode global social cohesion.

Young people represent the world's brightest hope to reverse these trendlines. In 2014, the world's youth population (between 15 and 24 years) rose to 1.8 billion, eclipsing the adult population in scores of developing countries. **The vast majority of young people are not involved in, or in danger of participating in, violence. Many young women and men are actively working for peace and security in their communities, as documented extensively in the 2018 global study, "The Missing Peace."[3]** However, the prevailing narrative frames youth as a problem to be solved or a threat to be contained. This leads decisionmakers to focus spending on hard security approaches which often do more harm than good, stigmatizing youth and fueling their sense of injustice and loss of faith in their governments and the international system. **Evidence and research instead demonstrate the need to invest in young people's innovative peace work and their socio-cultural, political, and economic participation and inclusion.**

Young people represent the majority of the population in the top conflict-affected countries, where on average 50 percent of the population is below the age of 20, and in some countries, more than 70 percent

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2 The Economic Value of Peace 2018: Measuring the Global Economic Impact of Violence and Conflict. Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018. http://visionofhumanity.org/reports

3 "The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security" was undertaken on a UN Security Council mandate over a period of two years, through a consultative process engaging over 4,200 youth across 153 countries. Text and images throughout this document are directly sourced and adapted from the publication. See: Simpson, Graeme. The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. United Nations Population Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office, 2018. youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy

"DESPITE LIVING IN VERY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, THE YOUNG PEOPLE CONSULTED HAVE NOT TURNED TO VIOLENCE, EVEN IF SO MANY IN THEIR COMMUNITY HAVE. THIS RESISTANCE TO VIOLENCE IS STRENGTH IN WHICH TO INVEST."

[NIGER CONSULTATION FOR "THE MISSING PEACE"]

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of the population is below the age of 30.[4] It is estimated that one in four young people today are living in or are otherwise affected by armed conflicts and violence, with devastating effects.[5] As well as being primary victims of violence, armed groups and violent extremists often target young people for recruitment, and young people are the primary perpetrators of conflict in some areas.[6] When policies and programs view youth through these lenses alone, however- as either victims or perpetrators of violence- they overlook the power and potential of young people's contributions to preventing and reducing violence, and building peace.

GLOBAL LEGISLATION TO ADVANCE YPS: HARNESSING THE YOUTH PEACE DIVIDEND

INVESTING IN THE LEADERSHIP AND CONTRIBU-TIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS CRITICAL TO PEACE AND SECURITY

Youth populations have long been at the forefront of political and social change. **Around the world, young people channel their creative mobilizing power to mitigate negative effects of conflict, prevent recurring cycles of violence, disengage and reduce recruitment into armed groups, and build social cohesion.[7]** The vast majority of young people do not participate in violence, and research has identified conditions and factors that contribute to youth resilience.[8] On an individual and community level, relationships of respect and dignity, opportunities to exercise agency,[9] and a sense of self-realization are as important for young people's resilience as their need for material well-being. On a societal level, respect for civil and political

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4 The median age in the world's least peaceful countries today ranged from 16 to 27 years: Afghanistan (17.2 years), Syrian Arab Republic (23.6), South Sudan (18.4), Yemen (19.1), Iraq (20), Somalia (16.2), Central African Republic (17.1), Libya (27.1), Democratic Republic of Congo (16.8), according to 2015 figures from United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Population Division. In Afghanistan, 63% of the population is below the age of 25; in South Sudan, nearly 74% of the population is under the age of 30; and 75% of the population in Somalia is under the age of 30.

5 Over 90 percent of direct conflict deaths are estimated to occur among young males, and in 2015, 43 percent of homicides globally occurred among youth aged 10-29 years (UNFPA, State of World Population 2015, p.21). Youth also experience a wide range of less visible, short- and long-term effects, including repeat victimization, psychological trauma, identity-based discrimination, and social and economic exclusion, among others.

6 In 2015, almost 60 percent of suspected perpetrators of homicide in the Americas were males under the age of 30. (State of crime and criminal justice worldwide: Report of the Secretary-General. Doha: Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 2015.)

7 See case studies in Annex: McEvoy, 2001; Del Felice and Wisler, 2007; UNOY Peacebuilders and SFCG, 2017; Simpson, 2018.

8 See case studies in Annex: McGill and O'Kane, 2015; RAND Corporation, 2015 and 2017; International Alert, 2016; SFCG and UNOY Peacebuilders, 2018.

9 Evidence has shown, for example, that youth participation in the design and implementation of community development strategies is important for reducing violence and extremism, and increasing peace (see Simpson, 2018). The USAID 2012 Youth in Development Policy also recognizes that youth participation can contribute to more sustainable development outcomes and more resilient and democratic societies.

"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. "

MALE, TUNISIA (CONSULTATION FOR "THE MISSING PEACE")

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rights such as freedom of expression and access to safe spaces for activism are important enabling factors for youth's positive resilience and contributions to peace. Young people who have received peace and conflict resolution training and awareness are more likely to prevent gender-based violence, disrupt bullying and discrimination, and become positively involved in their communities.[10] **The latest evidence from around the world indicates that investing in the positive resilience of young people and directly supporting their peacebuilding work is significantly more effective than engaging them from a risk-based or remedial aproach.** In 2015, the UN Security Council passed a groundbreaking resolution (2250) recognizing the positive role of youth in peace and security and calling for their increased representation in decisionmaking at all levels within peace and security mechanisms and institutions.

TACKLING HARMFUL STEREOTYPES AND POLICY MYTHS IS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT POSITIVE RESILIENCE

Policies and programming based on problematic assumptions and misconceptions not only limit the positive contributions young people could be making, but they are also an ineffective use of the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars going to violence prevention every year.[11] Research strongly indicates, for example, that violent conflict is likely explained by a combination of experiences of injustice, horizontal inequality, and identity-based factors.[12] However, the "youth bulge" theories- positing that large populations of unemployed, uneducated (male) youth cause violence- persist in international and national policies and programs. Global concerns over terrorism, organized transnational crime, and violent extremism perpetuate these negative and inaccurate stereotypes. As a result, programming and policy responses skew towards preemptive, hard security and law enforcement approaches which are less cost-effective and even counterproductive.[13] These approaches further stigmatize youth, deepen their sense of injustice, and limit and repress avenues for peaceful expression and action.

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10 See case study in Annex: McGill and O'Kane, 2015.

11 Stimson Study Group on Counterterrorism Spending, Counterterrorism Spending: Protecting America While Promoting Efficiencies and Accountability. Washington, D.C., Stimson Center, 2018; Office of Audits, Middle East Regional Operations. Audit of the Department of State Implementation of Policies Intended To Counter Violent Extremism. Office of Inspector General, United States Department of State, June 2019.

12 See case studies in Annex: Richards, 1996; Abbink and Kessel, 2005; Mercy Corps, 2015; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017 (pp. 63-64).

13 See case studies in Annex: Aliaga and O'Farrel, 2017, p. 22; Attree, 2017; Boukhars, 2017, p. 18; CIVICUS, 2017; Jennings, 2017; Muggah, 2012; Muggah, 2017; Neumann, 2017, p. 25; Nordås and Davenport, 2013; Novelli, 2017; Scott, 2017, p. 7; UNDP, 2016, p. 131; UNDP, 2017; UNDP, 2019.

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YOUTH-LED AND YOUTH-FOCUSED CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE AND SECURITY: CASES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Despite persistent exclusion from meaningful social, political, and economic participation, **young people around the world are actively engaged in building and sustaining peace**. Their actions range from simple acts of community service and civic engagement to organizing and mobilizing their peers at national, regional and global levels to address different forms of violence. **Youth work across all phases of the peace and conflict cycle,[14] from violence prevention to post-conflict peacebuilding, despite operational impediments and risks to their own personal safety.** A majority of the youth-led organizations surveyed operate with less than $10,000 per year, rely primarily on volunteers (97% of their members), and struggle to operate safely in conflict zones and under government repression.[15]

Much of today's youth-led peacebuilding work is intensely local, small-scale, and oriented towards other youth, but it can also extend to national and international level networking and programming.[16] **Regardless of scale and operational limitations, the impact of youth work often spans generations, communities, and borders.** In Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, for example, youth who had been active youth leaders have become policy makers at the community and national levels who look beyond ethnic and ideological divides to find common ground.[17] The adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2250, with youth organizations as its first advocates, demonstrates the power of young people's work at a global scale.[18]

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14 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

15 See case study in Annex: SFCG and UNOY Peacebuilders, 2017.

16 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

17 See case study in Annex: UNOY Peacebuilders, 2019.

18 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

> **"I AM A SOCIAL ACTIVIST AND I DO NOT FIND PEACE … I CANNOT HAVE PEACE UNTIL AND UNLESS OVERSIGHT FROM THE STATE AUTHORITIES OF MY WORK IS MINIMISED AND WHILE THEY DO NOT TRUST ME OR FEEL MY WORK IS IMPORTANT TO SOCIETY."**
>
> MALE, INDIA- AND PAKISTAN-ADMINISTERED JAMMU AND KASHMIR
> [FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR "THE MISSING PEACE"]

PREVENTING OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE

Youth often work during times of relative peace to prevent violence before it breaks out. They employ **diverse approaches for prevention and early intervention**, from education and after school programming to peace debates and dialogues, civic and voter education, and community radio and festivals. With support from the National Democratic Institute in 2010, youth-led, cross-tribal youth councils in Yemen successfully resolved at least 12 tribal conflicts through peer mediation teams they introduced in 20 local schools.[19] Moroccan youth mediators, trained under a USAID-funded program (2008-2009), directly contributed to a reduction in social tensions in Casablanca and Tetouan through their conflict mediations and community dialogue facilitation, according to youth and community leaders surveyed.[20] Young people around the world emphasize **the important role of education in resilience and prevention.** While quantitative studies across five decades indicate that inequality in educational attainment between ethnic and religious groups is associated with higher likelihoods of violence,[21] educational institutions and endeavors can also strengthen social cohesion and belonging, particularly when content and curriculum promote critical thinking and celebrate diversity through experiential and cooperative approaches.[22] World Vision International's Gestores de Paz in Colombia, for example, empowers school-aged children and youth to transmit messages of peace to their peers and families throughout the country, and now counts around 8,000 members. Over more than two decades of work, the initiative has received several international awards for promoting a culture of peace and tolerance.

Dialogue and virtual exchange are another way young people bridge sensitive divides and promote tolerance. Soliya's virtual exchange initiative brings together 1,000 youth every semester from around the world through an online educational platform designed to bridge Muslim and non-Muslim divides and increase cross-cultural understanding in more than 130 educational institutions in 28 countries. Participants experience increased positivity across divides, and in one case evaluated by MIT's Saxelab, they were even insulated from increased intergroup negativity among a control group following an act of "intergroup" violence.[23]

> A longitudinal study by the University of Chicago found that when Palestinian and Israeli teenagers participated in the three-week Seeds of Peace summer camps aimed at fostering safe spaces for long-term dialogue, they had greater positive attitudes towards the others' groups even years after programming.[24]

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19 National Democratic Institute. "Youth Conflict Resolution Program Yields Results in Yemen." Accessed July 29, 2019. https://www.ndi.org/Yemen-Cross-Tribal-Youth-Council-Program

20 See case study in Annex: Search for Common Ground, 2009.

21 See case study in Annex: UNICEF, 2017.

22 See case study in Annex: UNESCO, 2018.

23 Virtual Exchange Coalition. "MIT Saxelab Research Partnership." Accessed August 26, 2019. http://virtualexchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/VirtualExchange_saxelab.pdf

24 See case study in Annex: Schroeder and Risen, 2016 (pp. 72-93).

PREVENTING AND MITIGATING ESCALATIONS OF VIOLENCE DURING CONFLICT

Where violence has emerged, **youth also work to mitigate its impact and build social cohesion and resilience**. A group of young human rights advocates in Myanmar, for example, launched a social media campaign in 2015 in response to increasing interethnic tension and violence and discrimination against the country's ethnic minority Rohingya population. Using the hashtags #myfriend or #friendshiphasnoboundaries, the campaign built a Facebook following of more than 30,000 in two years by encouraging people to post photos of themselves with friends of other ethnicities.[25] In another example, the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre in Somalia has supported disengagement and reintegration of young combatants since the 1990s through their "Drop the gun, pick up the pen" initiative. Over 3,500 individuals have participated in their program, which focuses on connecting newly disengaged youth with reintegrated combatants who serve as mentors and help sensitize communities to reintegration.[26]

> In South Sudan, Search for Common Ground's youth radio talk show, "Hiwar Al Shabab," led to a 69% increase in the percentage of listeners identifying more strongly with their national identity over their ethnic identity, the latter of which has been a major driver of the country's chronic conflict, as well as a 78% increase in the number of people who say they trust members of another ethnic group.[27]

Monitoring and documenting human rights violations is another key role youth have taken up during conflict. The staff at Mwatana, a Sana'a-based organization documenting human rights violations throughout Yemen, are almost entirely young and engages an even larger network of volunteers aged 20-30 years.[28] Through research and investigation, legal support, and national and international advocacy they have secured the release of several individuals who had been unjustly detained. Youth groups have also helped maintain social cohesion by delivering life-saving humanitarian assistance when infrastructure fails and international organizations pull out during conflict.[29]

In the midst of ongoing violent conflict, **schools and education can also be important sources of stability and positive resilience** for young people. Educational institutions are often a site of ideological and political struggle, and are frequently targeted in conflict. Protection of education and educational spaces amidst conflict is important for social cohesion, community bonding and organizing, as well as resilience and psychosocial recovery after conflict.[30] From 2014-2016, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding training for educators, parents, young people and their communities in Yemen encouraged a cultural shift away from the acceptance of violence in schools, helping to create a safer environment

> "WHEN I HEAR THE EXPLOSIONS I GET SCARED BUT WHEN I'M IN THE CLASSROOM I FEEL SAFE. I JUST WANT TO FINISH MY SCHOOLING SO I CAN BECOME AN ENGINEER."
>
> MALE, ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE IN YEMEN (UNHCR, 2017)

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25 Rigby, Jennifer. "Students in Myanmar start selfie campaign to promote tolerance." Mashable. Accessed July 29, 2019. https://mashable.com/2015/11/06/myanmars-my-friend-campaign/#1ArEwPFAc8q6

26 See case study in Annex: UNDP, 2019.

27 See case study in Annex: Search for Common Ground, 2017.

28 See case study in Annex: UNDP, 2019.

29 See case study in Annex: SFCG and UNOY Peacebuilders, 2017

30 See case study in Annex: Lopes and Scotto, 2017.

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for young people and improving social cohesion. The program reached over 30,000 students, and 50% of teachers reported that their ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence had improved despite the war.[31] USAID-funded programs to improve access and quality of education for more than 100,000 young people in Somalia from 2011-2017 contributed to a near 65% reduction in young Somalis' willingness to support or participate in political violence when structured community-engagement opportunities complemented access to education.[32]

> In Chicago's public schools, the "Becoming a Man" program run by Youth Guidance and World Sport Chicago combined interactions with pro-social adults with afterschool programming, social policy intervention, and cognitive behavioral therapy. Evaluation of the program found it led to reduced crime-related activities in the short-term and improved educational outcomes such as graduation.[33]

In another example in Brazil, when more than 5,000 schools in São Paulo opened their doors on the weekends for sports, artistic, cultural and leisure activities for the community as part of the Open Schools Programme, the city recorded a 45.5% reduction of criminal acts during this period (between 2003 and 2006).[34]

PEACEBUILDING "AFTER" VIOLENT CONFLICT

Following the cessation of mass hostilities during violent conflicts and wars, **young people engage in efforts to ensure that various forms of violent conflict do not recur or re-emerge**. Formal and informal peace processes traditionally exclude young people, although youth have engaged directly and indirectly in the Philippines, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. as documented in a recent report, "We Are Here: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes."[35] The report finds that youth

31 See case study in Annex: Zwart, 2019.

32 See case study in Annex: Mercy Corps, 2018.

33 See case study in Annex: Heller et. al, 2015.

34 "Open Schools: Education for Culture and Peace," UNESCO, 2008. Accessed August 30, 2019. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Brasilia/pdf/open_schools_programme_folder_en.pdf

35 See case study in Annex: Altiok and Grizelj, 2019.

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participation in peace processes likely increases the sustainability of peace agreements and contributes to "more inclusive and representative governance structures that build the basis for more peaceful societies." A 2018 UN Security Council resolution (2419) recognizing the importance of inclusive and meaningful youth participation in negotiating and implementing peace agreements.

In other instances, **youth-led disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs for former combatants and offenders have contributed to preventing relapse** into violent conflict, for example in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia and various parts of Central America.[36] In one example in Liberia, a local organization led by reformed combatants and other formerly high-risk youth developed a short-term cognitive behavior therapy program for young people regularly engaging in crime, drugs, or violence including former members of armed groups. A randomized evaluation from 2009-2012 found that those who received therapy were 55% less likely to carry a weapon in the short term and recipients reported a long-term reduction in impulsivity.[37]

Peer-to-peer engagement across conflict divides has also prevented recurrence of violence. By building trust and connections among the youth wings of different armed groups and political parties, for example, a network of Karenni (Kayah) youth organizations in Myanmar improved intergroup relations to the extent that the groups rarely fight now and their state has had significantly reduced violent armed conflict since 2012.[38] Youth have also been heavily involved iwn transitional justice processes- in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Timor-Leste for example- as well as efforts to ensure future generations learn from past conflict.[39] The Kenyan youth-led initiative Picha Mtaani, for instance, hosted a 24-hour

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36 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

37 See case study in Annex: Blattman, 2017.

38 See case study in Annex: Mubashir and Grizelj, 2018.

39 See case study in Annex: ICTJ, 2018.

street exhibition to reflect on violence that broke out following 2007-2008 elections that was visited by about 500,000 people nationwide.[40]

TACKLING KEY FORMS OF VIOLENCE: VIOLENT EXTREMISM, CRIMINAL VIOLENCE, AND SGBV

Today's millennials and Gen-Z generations have grown up seeing first hand the interplay between political and extremist violence and organized criminal violence - how one often fuels or exacerbates the other. Their peace work targets various forms of violence which are often interrelated, from violent extremism and criminal violence, to sexual and gender-based violence, conflict over natural resources, ethnic and communal violence, and more, as documented in "The Missing Peace" global study.[41]

Young people around the world work to prevent and reduce extremist violence in their local and global communities through direct action and preventive efforts that celebrate diversity and constructive alternatives to violence. There are several youth-led initiatives to prevent recruitment by violent extremist and armed groups in the Lake Chad Basin region across Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, for example.[42] A group of young people in the Netherlands target online polarization through their "Dare to Be Grey" platform, creating a "grey" middle ground for sharing and listening to different views and perspectives.[43] In another example, a network of 23 youth groups in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Youth Peace Network, sends teams to schools and villages to prevent at-risk young people from joining militant groups through peer-to-peer engagement and training. They have reached 219 youth through their program, in addition to their influential school campaigns highlighting the negative impacts of militant groups and promoting the values of peace and non-violence. **Youth often lead this valuable work to prevent and mitigate the impact of violent extremism within repressive and dangerous policy environments, enabled by largely ineffective counterterrorism policies and programs that label broad populations of youth as a threat to national or international security.[44]** Around the world, young peacebuilders highlighted how their human rights, peaceful protest, and legitimate political expression and organization are often violated and suppressed under counterterrorism strategies.

"WE CAN'T TALK ABOUT PEACE AND SECURITY WITH GROUPS THAT DO NOT HAVE BASIC RIGHTS. WE FIRST NEED TO SECURE PEOPLE'S BASIC RIGHTS."

YOUNG PERSON, ARAB STATES (CONSULTATION FOR "THE MISSING PEACE")

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40 See case study in Annex: Ismail, 2017.

41 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

42 See case study in Annex: Ekpon, 2017.

43 See case study in Annex: Williams, 2016.

44 Ibid.

"YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS WHO ARE WORKING IN THE CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES AND WORKING FOR PEACE, THERE SHOULD BE A MECHANISM/PROCESS FOR SAFETY OF YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS. AGENDA OF YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY SHOULD NOT BE USED TO SHRINK SPACES FOR YOUTH-LED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS BUT SHOULD BE USED TO CREATE MORE CIVIC SPACES. "

YOUNG PERSON, CAMEROON (UNOY PEACEBUILDERS AND SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, 2017)

Young people involved in gangs and organized crime in places such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, Colombia are manipulated and mobilized by elders and political elites.[45] **Despite the risks, many youth undertake courageous and creative initiatives to reduce organized crime and youth participation in violent gangs.** In the United States, Cure Violence's *Safe Streets* program in Baltimore worked with former members of gangs and extremist groups to mediate conflicts and serve as role models for young people likely to be involved in gun violence. As a result, young participants were less likely to support the use of guns for settling disputes than those in neighbourhoods without Safe Streets programming.[46] In another example in Brazil, Luta pela Paz ("Fight for Peace") combines boxing, martial arts, and education to help demobilize gang members and prevent others from joining. Founded in 2000 by a young man in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro, it has since expanded through partnerships to provide similar services 25 countries. It uses boxing and martial arts training to teach young people discipline, self-control and sportsmanship, coupled with after-school assistance, vocational training, support services from social workers, and leadership opportunities. More than 90% of participants described feeling more confident and healthy because of their involvement, 89% were more willing to cooperate with others, and 88% felt more optimistic about their future.[47]

Young people also work to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence around the world. For example, in India, young people developed the SafetiPin app to protect women and prevent violence by mapping safe and unsafe areas of cities using GPS tracking. The app has been used by government agencies and security departments and has expanded across 10 cities in India and three more urban areas in other parts of the world. The "Men Can Stop Rape" initiative in the United States promotes "positive masculinity" among high schools and colleges and evaluations found that participants were significantly more likely to intervene in situations when a young woman was touched inappropriately by her male peers.[48] In another example, the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, AllSexuals and Gays successfully advocated for constitutional protections and criminal justice reforms around gender-based crimes. The forum also helped shift public attitudes through mass multimedia campaigns, such as the We Are Jamaica campaign, highlighting the life stories of LGBTI Jamaicans.

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45 See case studies in Annex: OAS, 2017; Interpeace, 2018.

46 See case study in Annex: Webster et al, 2012.

47 See case study in Annex: Simpson, 2018.

48 See case study in Annex: Hawkins, 2011.

> "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."
>
> YOUNG PERSON, FRANCE (UNOY PEACEBUILDERS AND SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, 2017)

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CONCLUSION

Amidst a time of heightened violent conflict in the world and the threat of devastating geopolitical upheaval, young people represent the world's brightest hope. Against all odds, they continue to demand justice from oppressive ecosystems of state violence, they continue to innovate for peace and justice, and they continue to build bridges across all global divides.

A recent study by One Young World found that every 1 USD invested in the young people participating in their programs leads to 13 USD of social value.

However, around the world, youth remain under-represented in overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.[49] Despite their valuable contributions and potential at the frontline of efforts to prevent violent extremism, for example, only a tiny fraction of funding goes to youth-inclusive or youth-led prevention efforts.[50] This phenomenon is replicated in the wider philanthropic field, where only 0.14% of global foundation giving goes to peace and security work with children and youth,[51] despite high potential return on investments in youth.[52] Administrative and bu-

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49 A study with youth and government representatives engaged in preventing and countering violent extremism from 14 countries, for example, found that when youth are consulted in policy or decisionmaking processes on security issues, it is often due to personal connections or professional reputation on a case-by-case basis rather than through open or equitable access.

50 See case studies in Annex: UNDP, 2019; The Asia Foundation, 2017; Rosand, 2016.

51 The Peace and Security Funding Index estimates that of a total 32 billion USD global foundation giving in 2016, only 45 million USD were allocated to peace and security initiatives involving children or young people.

52 A recent study by One Young World found that every 1 USD invested in the young people participating in their programs leads to 13 USD of social value.

reaucratic impediments[53] prevent a diversity of youth, especially those from underrepresented groups, and youth-led groups and movements, many of which are informal and small-scale,[54] from accessing funding and programming related to peace and security.

Young people are already building peace in countries worldwide. With increased investment and support, youth could increase their impact and strengthen peace and security efforts across communities and borders. A Youth, Peace and Security Act in the United States of America could play an unparalleled role in investing in the global youth-led movement for peace, helping young people build the security and common ground the world needs at this critical time in history.

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53 Former and current USAID staff have acknowledged a procurement problem inhibiting support for local groups that support peacebuilding and, by extension, applies to youth as key actors in grassroots community development and peacebuilding actors. (see https://www.devex.com/news/as-peace-gap-widens-usaid-must-fix-its-procurement-problem-95155)

54 A majority of youth-led organizations surveyed operate with less than $10,000 per year, rely primarily on volunteers (97% of their members), and struggle to operate safely in conflict zones and under government repression - including difficulties registering formally as an NGO.

ANNEX: CASE STUDIES

GLOBAL AND MULTI-COUNTRY STUDIES (IN ORDER OF CITATION)

Simpson, Graeme. The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. United Nations Population Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office, 2018. Accessed July 29, 2019. https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-10/youth-web-english.pdf

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