

# **Sub-Working Group on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding of the Inter-Agency Network for Youth Development (IANYD)**

## **Operational Guidance on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding Workshop – 4-5 June 2014 – New York Concept Note**

### **1. Background**

The potential contribution of young people – defined by the UN as between the ages of 15 to 24 – to sustainable peacebuilding has received little attention and support to date. In most post-conflict contexts, young people remain on the margins or are excluded from participating in peacebuilding processes. Yet, a growing body of evidence from the field and academic research highlights that young people are playing active and valuable roles as agents of positive change. Youth-led peacebuilding interventions, often led at the grass-root level, can help build peaceful communities and underpin democratic, inclusive governance. Young people's participation in peacebuilding is an untapped potential that should be positively and actively supported by the international community as a key to durable peace.

Recent efforts by civil society organizations including international NGOs, youth-led NGOs and the United Nations have helped raise awareness of the need for increased coordination and collaboration of actors actively engaged on youth and peacebuilding issues. However, efforts remain incipient to date. While youth development is a topic of growing attention in international and national dialogues, peacebuilding often remains disconnected from these discussions -- let alone the translation of policy into action-oriented youth programmes on the ground. Young people remain often absent from peace and security discussions – or, are seen as a security threat to contain. The lack of internationally-agreed policy frameworks on youth, peace and security, has limited the visibility, prioritization and associated funding allocation to peacebuilding that would be inclusive of young people's voices and perspectives.

To help fill the gap, an inter-agency group has developed *Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding*. This group has been led by PBSO and Search for Common Ground, and has included over 40 members from the UN (PBSO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilization, UN-Habitat, etc.), NGOs (Mercy Corps, Women's Refugee Commission, Search for Common Ground, Girls Scouts, World Vision International etc.), CSOs (United Network of Young Peacebuilders) and academia. These guiding principles are designed to inform participative, inclusive and inter-generational peacebuilding strategies and programmes that systematically promote and ensure participation and contributions of young people. They aim at offering guidance to key actors including Governments, UN entities, funds and programmes, national and international non-governmental organizations, civil society actors and donors.

These principles, conceived to be overarching and applicable to a wide range of actors (the “*why*” and the “*what*”), need to be accompanied by operational guidance (“*how to*”) based on evidence and practice from the field.

Indeed, organizations involved in the Sub-Working Group have assessed that the most critical gap to date is the knowledge and operational gap: there are very few practical tools to help guide programmatic work on young people's participation in peacebuilding, based on a thorough analysis of effective approaches, good practices and lessons learned from the field.

Sector-specific efforts and guidance exist, but does not offer the overarching guidance needed for this area of work, often because the primary emphasis is on children, prioritizing protection strategies over substantive engagement, participation and empowerment. Partners from the peacebuilding UN and NGO community have repeatedly highlighted that this lack of guidance limits the possibility to expand on this area of work and deliver the right interventions in the right place and at scale.

There is significant experience in the field of youth and peacebuilding, but this experience has not been documented, validated and codified. This collective effort aims to assemble the evidence and produce guidance based on the existing lessons learned and good practices.

## **2. Objective**

The workshop will have two main objectives:

- 1) Agreement on key issues and parameters for operational guidelines on young people's participation and peacebuilding, including selection of thematic sections.
- 2) Agreement on the key elements of the process for developing the guidelines on young people's participation in peacebuilding, including consultation methodology, key stakeholders, timeline, and any additional capacity requirements.

## **3. Key Issues for Discussion**

The Workshop will address the following key issues that will shape the parameters of the guidance or practice note:

### Scope of guidance:

- The overall nature of the document: guidance, practice note, policy or programme orientation;
- The extent to which the document should give attention to strategic issues;
- The subject group: define "youth" and which "youth";
- The setting of contextual parameters for "peacebuilding"; and
- The target audience.

### Thematic Areas:

- Scope of the "systems" (national youth-related policies, community building, etc.) and traditional sectors to be addressed (governance, security sector reform, DDR, social services, etc.)
- The level of the interventions (individual, community, national, subnational, institutional, etc)

### Timeline & Process:

- Timeline for development of guidance;
- Process for development of guidance (task force, consultations with youth groups at field level, etc.)

#### **4. Participants**

Participants to the workshop will represent UN entities, international NGOs, community-based organizations, youth networks and donors. Participants will be expected to be actively involved in the Task Force that will lead the development of the Operational Guidance in the months following the workshop, by reviewing drafts and providing substantive inputs at key points of the development process. The workshop is the first step in this process.

#### **5. Location & timing**

Date: The workshop will take place on 4-5 June 2014.

Location: Girl Scouts of the USA, 420 Fifth Avenue (between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> streets), New York, NY 10018.

**Please RSVP to Cécile Mazzacurati ([mazzacurati@un.org](mailto:mazzacurati@un.org)) and Saji Prelis ([sprelis@sfcg.org](mailto:sprelis@sfcg.org))  
by Friday 30 May Close of Business at the latest.**