

# FAST FACTS

## Youth Peace and Security in Asia Pacific



### Introduction

Young people's role in peace and security has been understudied. Very little is understood and tends to be largely stereotypical, with young men and women considered "victims" or "perpetrators" in a conflict. For the first time in history, in December 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted the first [resolution \(UNSCR 2250\)](#) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), recognizing the positive contributions of young women and men to peace. This landmark resolution identifies five key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and disengagement and reintegration. Resolution 2250 was followed in 2018 by [resolution 2419](#) and, in 2020, by [resolution 2535](#), underlining the vital need to include youth in peacebuilding decision-making and supporting their work in building and sustaining peace.

More than 1.1 billion young people aged 15 to 29 live in the Asia-Pacific, representing more than 25 per cent of the population. The Asia-Pacific is home to 60 per cent of the world's young people, making it the most youthful region. At the same time, multiple countries in the region are in the midst of multidimensional crises and armed conflict, and half of the world's refugee population is located in this region. Thus, the youth in the region are often exposed to the detrimental impacts of violent conflicts, disasters, poverty and inequalities. While the YPS agenda globally represents a significant and well-established thematic agenda, the region lacks progress towards implementing the agenda, even eight years after resolution 2250. No other country in the region, other than the Philippines, is even close to a national strategy, framework or plan to implement the YPS agenda.

Further, acknowledging the socio-political agency of youth, it is crucial to ensure young people and youth-led organizations are a meaningful part of national and regional implementation efforts like coalition-building, policy formulation and monitoring implementation. However, while many young people are contributing to building peace in their communities, significant work remains to increase the meaningful and active engagement of young people and youth organizations in peacebuilding processes and decision-making to strengthen the implementation of the YPS agenda.

### UNDP in Action

UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub (BRH) mapped 88 UNDP-implemented Youth Peace and Security (YPS) initiatives to understand the trends of the YPS programming in the Asia-Pacific region, and highlight avenues to further support the initiatives across the region. These initiatives have been implemented in the eight years from 2017 to 2023.



Under the [Integrated Governance Programme II](#), UNDP **Maldives** is aiming to strengthen institutional capacities in line with global development agendas, international standards and good practice. It included enhancing capacities and mechanisms for civil society, women and youth to participate in public life, promote human rights and contribute to social cohesion. Through a series of capacity-building sessions, sixty young people were brought together to identify the main challenges faced by the Maldivian youth community and gaps in policy and behaviour that contributes to these challenges. As a result of the annual national youth camp, a Youth Declaration including 14 statements or recommendations for the government was presented by the youth, which was endorsed by the government to inform policy making.



UNDP implemented the [Empowering Youth as Agents for Peace and Social Cohesion in the Solomon Islands \(EYAPSCSI\) project](#) in support of recently launched National Youth Policy in the **Solomon Islands**. It worked towards making the communities in the hotspot areas more

resilient to conflict with more socially, economically and politically empowered youth engaging as peace builders and proactive social entrepreneurs to address local sources of grievances. More than 500 young leaders were engaged in training programmes on governance and leadership, peacebuilding and gender equality, youth entrepreneurship and innovation. It supported establishment of youth caucuses and engagement of youth in community level productive activities such as regular community meetings on social and economic issues, other community affairs and 26 social entrepreneurship projects. Twenty youth caucuses were transferred from the grassroots to the Solomon Islands National Youth Congress (NYC). As an integral part of NYC, these will function under its Provincial Youth Councils.



UNDP **Philippines** supported The Bangsamoro Youth Commission (BYC) in organizing several [youth consultations to develop the Bangsamoro Regional Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security](#) (BAP-YPS) between 2021-2022. A total of ninety-one (44 female and 47 male) youth representatives were involved from the Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Cotabato City, and North Cotabato provinces. The plan was launched on 15 December 2023. UNDP also supported the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in conducting a series of consultation workshops on the Bangsamoro Plan of Action on Community Resilience (BPA-CoRe). The workshops involved BARMM ministries and offices, CSOs, women and youth organizations, and faith-based leaders and focused on the assessment of risks,



mapping of existing capacities and initiatives for community resilience, and identification of priority areas for pilot-testing of the BPA-CoRe.

In **Timor-Leste**, [Covid-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste \(CORE-TL\)](#) project was implemented by the UNDP, in partnership with the Governments of Japan and Timor-Leste, EU Election Observation Mission, Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) and National Commission for Election (CNE). It aimed at aiding the Parliament's digital transformation via technical tools, channels, and in-house capacity, including a Youth Engagement Platform. It supported STAE to develop and initiate a school-based voter and civic education programme and strategy targeting first-time voters aged 16-17 years. 506 students (57% women) participated. The youth civic engagement programme covered 20 schools far away from the municipality centre in 10 municipalities to increase their access to information on civil and voting rights. Further, 102 young journalists were trained by UNDP and the Press Council on journalism and election, such as data interpretation, digital tools, and fact verification.



Under the [Decentralization, Human Rights and Local Governance \(DHL\) Project](#) in **Pakistan**, country's first provincial human rights policy was established. UNDP supported design and establishment of an integrated Human Rights Information Management System (HRIMS). The Community Stabilization Component for PVE aimed at amplifying the impact of the disengagement activities. It had Gender Desks and engagement of community-level organizations such as Integrated Support Groups (ISGs), women advisory boards and Girls peer group. It imparted vocational skill training in addition to providing psychosocial support services for rehabilitation and re-integration of the identified targeted youth and girls. Awareness and sensitization. It involved Youth Councilors and local communities and expanded community stabilization programs in KP, Sindh and Punjab as well.

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