



Investing in Youth-Led Organizations to Advance the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda: A Data-Driven Approach

Draft Concept Note for Side Event at ECOSOC Youth Forum 2019

*9 April 2019, 3:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.
Conference Room E*

Agenda

- 3:00 p.m. Opening Remarks
- H. E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver, Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN and co-sponsor of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)
 - H. E. Mr. Kai Sauer, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN
- 3:20 p.m. Presentations by Youth-Led Organizations and on Youth Programming
- Mr. Alessandro Girola, Programming Coordinator at UNAOC
 - Ms. Abiodun Rufus Unegbu, Executive Director of the Leadership Initiative for Youth Empowerment and UNAOC Alumna (Nigeria)
 - Mr. Youness Ben-Abbou, International Project Coordinator of Chantiers Sociaux Marocains and UNAOC Alumnus (Morocco)
 - Mr. Michael McGill, author of the independent evaluation report for the Youth Solidarity Fund
- 3:40 p.m. Panel Discussion
- Moderator: Ms. Cecile Mazzacurati, Head of Secretariat for the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, United Nations Population Fund/Peacebuilding Support Office
 - Mr. Solvi Karlsson, Program Manager – Children and Youth, Search for Common Ground
 - Ms. Abiodun Rufus Unegbu, Executive Director of the Leadership Initiative for Youth Empowerment
 - Mr. Youness Ben-Abbou, International Project Coordinator of Chantiers Sociaux Marocains
 - Mr. Michael McGill, author of the independent evaluation report for the Youth Solidarity Fund
- 4:15 p.m. Q&A
- 4:40 p.m. Closing
- Emcee: Ms. Vanessa Suen, Project Management Specialist – Youth and Innovation, UNAOC*

Background

Youth-led civil society organizations provide a unique contribution towards preventing conflict and consolidating peace. These organizations have a deep understanding of local conditions and meaningful community relationships, allowing them to work with populations that may be difficult for others to access. Moreover, young people implement innovative solutions to challenges and are the most able to mobilize their peers.

The Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, mandated by Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) and recognized in Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018), recommended that an investment be made in young people, such that they are viewed as equal and essential partners for peace. This included the provision of flexible funding designed with the specific needs of youth-led organizations in mind, and that any funding support include capacity-building to increase their financial sustainability and the impact of their work. The Progress Study made use of data from the report on Mapping a Sector: Bridging the Evidence Gap on Youth-Driven Peacebuilding (2017), produced by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders and Search for Common Ground. The report developed a broad overview of youth-led organizations working in peace and security, including their activities, achievements, strengths and needs.

UNAOC was established in 2005, as the political initiative of Mr. Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General and co-sponsored by the Governments of Spain and Turkey. Youth is one of the priority areas for the activities of UNAOC, which has developed programming that recognizes young people as essential partners in fostering mutual understanding between peoples of different cultures and religions, highlighting the will of the majority to reject violent extremism and embrace diversity. Youth-led organizations that foster peaceful and inclusive societies have been supported since 2008 through the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF). Seed funding and technical support are given to projects, led by and focused on young people, that demonstrate innovative and effective approaches to intercultural or interfaith dialogue. Financial support for recent editions has been provided by the Government of Finland. An independent evaluation report was produced in 2018, of ten youth-led organizations supported by YSF in 2016 and 2017, which includes best practices and lessons for similar youth-focused donor programmes.

Objective

With participation of Member States, UN entities, technical experts as well as young people, the event will focus on the data-driven evidence for investing in youth-led organizations working in the field of peace and security. It will also be a broader call to reflect on the need for a results-based approach, and for entities to convene around monitoring and evaluation for youth engagement.

Guiding questions for presentations and discussion

1. How are youth and youth-led organizations engaging in the peace and security sector?
2. From the evidence collected, what are the specific needs of youth-led peacebuilding organizations? What are some lessons learned from the data collected?
3. How can donor programmes better support young people and youth-led organizations?
4. What are the challenges in collecting data and evidence to strengthen youth-led peacebuilding organizations?
5. How can different stakeholders work more closely together in order to collect further data on this topic? Can lessons learned in different sectors (e.g. women, peace and security) be used as best practice for youth-led peacebuilding?

Biographies of Speakers



Ambassador Agustín Santos Maraver is the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations. Before his latest appointment, Mr. Santos served as his country's Consul General in Perpignan, France, beginning in 2017, and in Cape Town, South Africa, between 2013 and 2017. From 2011 to 2013, he was Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva. A career diplomat, Mr. Santos Maraver first joined the foreign service in 1982, as First Secretary at Spain's embassy in Beijing. Since then, he has been posted to the embassies in Havana, Washington, D.C., and Canberra, and in Brussels, where he was accredited to the European Union. In addition, he served as Adviser to the Diplomatic Cabinet of the President of the Government (Prime Minister) from 1992 to 1995, and as Chef de Cabinet to the President of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development, from 1991 to 1992. Mr. Santos Maraver holds a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and literature, as well as in political science and sociology from Complutense University in Madrid, where he also earned a doctoral degree in philosophy and in political science. He also has a diploma in international studies from the Diplomatic School in Madrid. He was born in 1955 in Los Angeles, United States.

Ambassador Kai Sauer is the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations. He has held the position since 2014. Ambassador Sauer has worked for the Finnish Foreign Ministry for nearly 25 years and served in Croatia, Kosovo, Austria and the US. Before moving to New York, Mr. Sauer served 4 years as the Ambassador of Finland to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He has also held several senior UN positions. Ambassador Sauer was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1967. He graduated from Tampere University in 1995 with a Master's in International Relations. He has also studied in Hamburg and Berlin. In 2007, the Finnish President awarded Ambassador Sauer the honorary title of First Class Knight of the Order of the Lion of Finland. In 2014, University of Tampere awarded him as the Alumni of the Year. Ambassador Sauer's military rank is corporal. Ambassador Sauer is married to Dr. Erika Sauer with whom he has two adult daughters. He is an active ice hockey player, a scuba diver and the founder of PR Runners, a group of UN permanent representatives who meet weekly to run in Central Park.



Abiodun Rufus Unegbu is a youth activist with over 15 years of experience in programmes for youth development. She is the Executive Director and co-founder of the civil society organization, Leadership Initiative for Youth Empowerment. She began working on peacebuilding issues in 2012 after the outbreak of religious violence in northern Nigeria. In 2016, with financial support from UNAOC's Youth Solidarity Fund, Abiodun implemented a project training young Muslims and Christians to serve as intercultural ambassadors, and complete internships in faith-based organizations as well as organizing community activities to promote understanding and tolerance. The project reached 18,000 community members and created partnerships between 30 local organizations. Abiodun is a 2018 U.S Embassy Nigeria Carrington Youth Fellow and a 2017 John Paul Usman Civic Leadership Award Recipient.

Youness Ben-Abbou is a filmmaker, socio-cultural youth worker and an international project coordinator at Chantiers Sociaux Marocains. The civil society organization received UNAOC's Youth Solidarity Fund in 2017, to implement a project that created a space for artistic expression and dialogue between Moroccans and migrant communities in five small cities in Morocco, thus breaking stereotypes and reducing xenophobic incidents. The project directly impacted 549 individuals, of which 417 were youth. Youness was a co-founder of the 20th February movement for social justice and human rights in Morocco. He is the founder of the Africa Unite collective which focuses on migrant rights and tackling racism. Currently, Youness is involved in creating a social art network and developing his filmmaking practice in Manchester.



Sölvi Karlsson is an expert on youth participation in peacebuilding and program manager at Search for Common Ground, the world's largest dedicated peacebuilding organization. The focus of his work is ensuring global policy frameworks on youth, peace and security lead to meaningful change for young people locally, nationally and internationally. Prior to joining Search for Common Ground, he co-lead the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders), the global umbrella organization for youth-led peacebuilding groups. Before that, he has been a youth activist, a youth worker and worked for a youth-oriented funding agency. He has been intimately involved in many of the recent developments of the international youth, peace and security agenda, both before and after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015).

Michael McGill is an experienced scholar-practitioner passionate about linking, improving, and increasing support to child and youth peacebuilders and increasing young people's prosocial civic engagement and democratic participation, particularly in high-risk contexts. He served as a Global Lead Evaluator of a multi-country, multi-agency, multi-donor (3M) participatory evaluation of child and youth participation in peacebuilding (www.sfcg.org/3m). Data collection and analysis included 122 child, youth, and adult evaluators and 1,567 evaluation participants. The process included designing and facilitating evaluator training and analysis workshops, including children, and developing cross-sector partnerships in each country where the evaluation was conducted. Since 2000, Michael has been designing and implementing research in conflict-affected contexts, training youth researchers, and facilitating productive interagency and international partnerships.





Cécile Mazzacurati heads the joint United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) / Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) Secretariat on Youth, Peace and Security, originally established to support the development of the Security Council-mandated Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. Cécile is also the co-chair of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security. Cécile has worked for over 15 years at the United Nations on youth and gender in peacebuilding and humanitarian settings. Earlier in her career, Cécile worked on women's rights, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS for different organizations including UNESCO and a Guatemalan human rights NGO. Cécile studied History at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in

France and holds a Masters degree in History from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.