

Expert-level Strategic Capacity-Building Workshop on Youth, Peace and Security for the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) members and countries considered by the PBC

Organized by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)

4 April 2023

Summary note

On 4 April 2023, the Swedish government agency the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) organized an expert-level strategic capacity-building workshop on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) for the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) members and countries considered by the Commission. Emerging from recommendations from the [written assessment of the implementation of the Commission's Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding](#), the workshop offered an opportunity for members to be able to identify youth sensitive and responsive actions to mainstream YPS in the Commission's activities and to have informal and interactive discussions on ways to operationalize [the Strategic Action Plan](#).

The workshop was composed of four working sessions, covering the following topics: 1) introduction to the YPS Agenda and the UN YPS architecture; 2) understanding meaningful youth participation; 3) applying a youth lens and mainstreaming a youth perspective and 4) advancing the implementation of the PBC Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding. Below is a summary highlighting key points derived from the discussions.

Session 1: Introduction to the YPS Agenda and the UN YPS architecture

The first session unpacked the rationale of the YPS agenda, by discussing dynamics of youth, conflict, violence, and peace. Facilitators further introduced relevant resolutions and principles of the YPS agenda and provided an overview of the YPS architecture within the United Nations system. After an introduction to the five pillars of the YPS agenda (Participation, Partnerships, Prevention, Protection and Disengagement and Re-integration), participants reflected in group discussions on the PBC's role in realizing the YPS agenda. In this regard, participants highlighted the importance to implement the Commission's Strategic Action Plan, facilitate participation of youth briefers at PBC meetings, include YPS related issues into PBC's advice to other intergovernmental bodies, and engage with youth on the ground through field visits. Participants further emphasized the importance of the PBC's normative role in mainstreaming the YPS agenda, including by reinforcing a narrative that emphasizes the positive contributions of youth to peace and security.

Session 2: Understanding meaningful youth participation

In the second session on meaningful youth participation, participants discussed different mechanisms of youth participation and what constitutes meaningful forms of youth participation, as opposed to forms of non-participation such as tokenism and manipulation. Participants were introduced to different levels and forms of youth participation and explored how meaningful

participation can take shape in practice. This session further examined the PBC's current engagement with young women and men. Participants argued that the Commission occasionally engages with youth in a consultative manner, including through inviting youth briefers at its meetings, noting that engagement with youth and follow ups to their participation could be improved. They emphasized the importance for the Commission to ensure meaningful participation of youth and make effort to take voices of diverse youth in a country or region into account. They also emphasized the importance of avoiding tokenistic practices, and strengthening follow up and feedback to young people engaged.

Session 3: Applying a youth lens and mainstreaming a youth perspective

In the third session, facilitators introduced the youth lens as a key tool for mainstreaming a youth perspective into activities and advice of the Commission to carry out youth-sensitive analysis and explore ways to formulate youth-sensitive language. In a group case study exercise, participants assessed a fictional advice of the Commission from a YPS perspective. Participants shared suggestions to make the Commission's advice more youth-sensitive, including through utilizing available data regarding youth and describing ways young people are disproportionately affected by conflict and crisis. Furthermore, participants emphasized the importance not to lump women and youth together and to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes of youth as violent. They stressed the need to recognize young people's positive contributions to peace and security.

Session 4: Advancing the implementation of the PBC Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding

The last session of the workshop focused on ways to advance the implementation of the Commission's Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding and report on progress, including by using the tools and concepts covered in the training. In group discussions on different topics related to the Commission's advisory, bridging and convening roles, participants discussed relevant entry points, actors, and concrete ideas for advancing the implementation of the Strategic Action, based on recommendations of its written assessment and beyond, as well as ways the PBC can become a catalyst to advance YPS within the UN system more broadly.

Mainstreaming a youth perspective in analysis and advice

In order to mainstream a youth perspective through the PBC's work, participants stressed the need to utilize youth-sensitive data and consider youth as agents of change instead of as victims or perpetrators. They reiterated the importance of ensuring active advocacy by the PBC members, enhancing diversity of youth briefers at the PBC and promoting greater ownership and commitment among the PBC members to implement the strategy. Participants also suggested to include youth-sensitive reports and analysis into the process of developing the PBC's advice, use technology to increase youth engagement and make more effort to integrate their perspectives, including through surveys or workshops. They called on the Commission to continue to engage with youth representatives through meetings and visits.

Strengthening PBC engagement with youth-focused/youth-led organizations & enhancing youth participation

On ways to strengthen PBC's engagement with youth and young people's participation, participants highlighted increased communication efforts and information sharing in PBC's engagement with youth briefers through PBSO, while stressing the need to ensure their protection. They emphasized the importance of regular dialogues with young people through the PBC's engagement and noted that the PBC members can ensure systematic YPS integration into PBC discussions. Members underlined the importance of formulating actionable recommendations in outcome documents and ensuring necessary follow-up in relation with YPS, including follow-up with consulted youth on how their input has been considered. Participants proposed to explore more ways to engage with youth, including through technology and organizing a seminar for the PBC from and with a diverse group of youth and suggested to engage youth in the preparations for PBC meeting materials and advice.

Momentum & normative development of YPS in the Security Council

Participants proposed ways to leverage the momentum and promote the normative development of the YPS agenda in the Security Council, including through active advocacy of Member States that are both members of the Council and the PBC, the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Commission, and the informal coordinator, in support of meaningful participation of youth. They highlighted entry points for the PBC to advance efforts to promote the YPS agenda in the Council, such as more youth-sensitive advice of the Commission to the Council, joint field missions that include engagement with youth, and strategic dialogues between the two bodies regarding the YPS agenda.

Partnerships, cooperation, synergies (with International Financial Institutions (IFIs), regional and subregional organizations, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC))

Participants called for the PBC's strengthened collaboration with the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, and other UN entities in advancing the YPS agenda, including through joint events and meetings on the topic and the Chair's remarks at relevant platforms. They highlighted the important roles of the PBC Chair and the informal coordinators of the relations between the PBC and other intergovernmental bodies in advancing coordination and collaboration in support of the YPS agenda. Participants emphasized the role of the PBC in advocacy to international, regional, and local actors, including IFIs and regional and subregional organizations, regarding the YPS agenda. They identified the resolution of the General Assembly on financing for peacebuilding (76/305) as one of entry points to enhance support for meaningful participation of youth.

Conclusion

Through an interactive format, the workshop provided the PBC members and countries considered by the PBC with an overview of the YPS agenda, as well as key concepts and methods to support its implementation. They underscored the importance of meaningful youth participation and practiced applying concrete tools such as the youth lens to inform the Commission's work on mainstreaming YPS and its engagement with youth. They reflected on the PBC's current efforts on YPS and stressed the need to strengthen the Commission's work in engaging with youth in a meaningful way and advance the Strategic Action Plan, highlighting the need for follow-up and accountability. They discussed ways to further advance the implementation of the PBC's Strategic Action Plan on Youth and Peacebuilding and expressed their commitment to further strengthen the role of the Commission to mainstream and advance the YPS agenda within the UN system and beyond.

The ideas and suggestions generated during the workshop, especially through the final group exercise, can be used as inspiration for the Commission in its continued work to promote young people's participation in peacebuilding.