

Youth Peace and Security Situational Analysis in Yemen

Submitted to the UNFPA - Yemen

By Search for Common Ground-Yemen and Youth without Borders Organization for Development

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"Youth should be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making of local, national and global levels."

*UN SG
Ban Ki-moon*



Author

Authors: Fadhel Abdullah, facilitated by Search-Yemen Team under the *Furthering YPS in Yemen* Project and Maher Othman, facilitated by Youth without Borders Organization for Development (YWBOD) A few sources cited in this report may be documents that are not formally published, and a few others are based on direct observation from the author as a Yemeni expert in addition to the formal documented references. The content expressed in this report are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies and/or opinions of Search for Common Ground, UNFPA or other partners.

Dedication

To every tired suffering **SOUL** of conflict in Yemen,
Seeking **PEACE, JUSTICE & RIGHTEOUSNESS**,
And for rescuing the future of our flowering **KIDS**,
With deep true hope and eagerness
For a flourishing and bright **YEMEN**,
THIS WORK IS BEING DEDICATED.



Photo 1 Yemeni Children calling for peace and education (Photo: the author)

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List of Abbreviations

CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CMs	Youth Consultation Meetings
CMR	Critical Mapping Review
CSC	Community Security Committees
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EYG	Elder Youth Group
FGDs	Focus Groups Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
GPC	General People Conference
GYG	General Youth Group
KII	Key Informant Interview
HIV / AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IANYD	United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MoL	Ministry of Law
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MoC	Ministry of Culture
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations (local)
NPC	(Yemeni) National Population Council
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFCG/Search	Search For Common Ground
SFD	Social Fund for Development
UN	United Nations
UN OSESGY	UN Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen
UN OSGEY	UN Office of Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nation Population Fund
UNSDGs	United Nation Sustainability Development Goals
UNOCHA/OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOY	The United Network Of Young Peacebuilders
UNSC	United Nation Security Council
UNSCR	United Nation Security Council Resolution
WPAY	The World Programme of Action for Youth
YPC	Youth Protection Committees
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security
YWBOD	Youth without Borders Organization for Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Funded by the UNFPA and implemented by Search for Common Ground (Search) and YWBOD, this report presents a situational analysis on Youth Peace and Security (YPS) in Yemen. With the aim to provide an overview of Yemeni youth's role in relation to the YPS 2250 agenda, the analysis is organized into six chapters that present the challenges faced by engaged Yemeni youth, as well as the opportunities that can be leveraged to support the activation and realization of the **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (UNSCR 2250)**. The following pages also present a number of existing international and national actors working on youth-related issues, existing initiatives, and recommendations for further programming and engagement. Ultimately, the findings of the report will contribute to the UNFPA's plan to operationalize the **UNSCR 2250** in Yemen, through three levels of impact (individual, institutional and enabling environment), thus contributing to the overall objective of *Furthering the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda in Yemen Project*¹.

This situational analysis is based on findings from research activities conducted throughout the YPS project. The findings uncovered specific challenges to the **localization** and operationalization of the UNSCR **2250** five pillars including (i) a weak economy and poverty; (ii) low levels of education; (iii) lack of security; (iv) exclusion of youth from national and international peace dialogues; (v) lack of direct communication channels between youth and the UN missions; (vi) absence of independent youth representation on all levels; and (vii) exclusion of women; **(viii) lack of awareness on UNSCR2250 among youth and community members; (ix) weak capacities of youth and youth lead CSOs and initiatives**. Research also highlighted cross-cutting issues such as the dominance of the elder generation preventing youth participation; violation of international humanitarian law by armed groups that hinders protection; the spread of drugs and weapons that stymie violence prevention efforts; the absence of social cohesion challenging disengagement; and the underestimation of youth abilities in general and young women in particular. Youth proposed several constructive solutions to overcome these barriers, such as training and job opportunities or independent youth committees and alliances under the UN missions. To push forward these identified solutions, the research identified 400 formal and informal youth-led CSOs and groups. Concurrently, existing international and national youth-focused programming could play a key role in empowering youth if steered by youth needs, interests, and challenges.² Pulling from programming learning and their own reflections, youth participants in the

¹ "Young women and men are empowered to participate in and influence the peacebuilding process in Yemen and further the YPS agenda and the overall outcome of the project at the enabling environment level."

² This report presents 12 international & 7 national initiatives for youth.

research proposed a long list of initiatives to push forward actions and activate allies to apply the YPS agenda and the UNSCR 2250 in Yemen.³

³ This report lists 21 unique initiatives proposed by youth in the CMR, covering 5 categories: Peace and Security, Political and Leadership promotion, Economic Empowerment, Education, and other issues. The rest of the lists can be found in the CMR report and CMs reports.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”

UNSCR 2250, December 9, 2015



Photo 2 Consultation Meeting 28 Participants from Hadhramout, Mukalla 31 Jul – 1 Aug 2019 (Photo: Search)

1.1. Terms, References & Definitions

This section explains the most frequent key terms used throughout this report. The table below provides a summary of these key terms:

Table 1 Key terms and reference:

Youth	The term ‘Youth’ cannot be easily given a single definition due to the physiological, psychological, mental features that are specific to youth, and also the different implications of the term youth in different nations and cultures. ⁴ Therefore, for the purpose of this report, the definition was inspired by the UN’s definition and the local Yemeni culture, which defines youth as those between the
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⁴ UNSC, *Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security*, 2018, <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>, last accessed Jan. 20th, 2020.

	<p>age of 18-35.⁵ Therefore, three identification terms were officially adopted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Younger Youth Group (YYG): refers to the age group between 15-24 years. 2. Elder Youth Group (EYG): refers to the age group between 25-35 years. 3. General Youth Group (GYG or Youth): refers to both age groups meaning those between 15-35 years.
Peacebuilding	<p>Drawing on the UN's definition⁶ of peacebuilding and the current Yemeni context, and for the purpose of this report, the term peacebuilding will be referred to as the different activities/supporting activities delivered by the different national, as well as international, active individuals and organizations working to re-establishing peace in Yemen, with main reference to the process led by the UN Special Envoy for ending the current conflict in Yemen and re-establishing peace including, peace dialogues, negotiations, promotion, advocacy, and other required activities. It will be referred to within this report as 'peacebuilding', 'building peace', 'peace-making', 'making peace' and 'peace efforts' with the same meaning.</p>
UNSCR 2250	<p>The five-pillar resolution declared by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on December 9, 2015 for youth and YPS. The five pillars include: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration. It will be referred to within this report as 'UNSCR 2250', 'UNSCR 2250' or the 'resolution' with the same meaning.</p>
Youth Initiatives	<p>Refers to established programmes, funds, institutions, entities, or others with a focus on youth programming, whether on international, national, or local levels. They will be presented in this reports as: International Youth Initiatives, National Youth Initiatives, and Youth Proposed/Suggested Initiatives.</p>
Youth-Led CSOs	<p>Include officially registered non-governmental organizations with the Republic of Yemen by youth, who run and manage the work of these organizations to address youth and peace issues. These youth-led CSOs have a minimum of 30% of the leadership positions occupied by youth between 18-35 years.</p>
Youth Groups/ Networks	<p>Unregistered youth organizations in Yemen that are established and run by youth regardless of their field of work. The only criteria for selection was to be an active group that is still working in the</p>

⁵ This identification was used for the Baseline Assessment (18-30 years), Ettar and For All Foundation, May 2019, Critical Mapping Review (18-35 years), Search, Oct. 2019, and the Youth Consultation Meetings assignment (18-35 year), Search, Oct. 2019. All were delivered under the YPS project.

⁶ United Nations, Peace and Security, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/peace-and-security/>, Last accessed December 9, 2019.

	field. ⁷ Within this report the terms 'youth groups', 'informal groups', 'networks', and 'groups' will be used interchangeably to refer to the same meaning stated here.
YPS Yemen	The Furthering the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda in Yemen project, implemented by Search-Yemen and others and funded by the UNFPA.

1.2. Situational Analysis Report

1.2.1. Objectives and Scope

The current situational report is the result of coordination between Search-Yemen, YWBOD and the UNFPA under the YPS project in Yemen. The aim of the report is to provide a precise overview of the youth situation in Yemen in relation to peace and security issues and directly related areas. It does not go deeply into the demographic or geographic characteristics of youth, rather it tackles the issues impacting the youth's ability to participate actively in peace processes with reference to the [UNSCR 2250](#). The report is an overall overview of the contextual issues relating to YPS, presenting summaries of tens of reports and studies in one place. It is inclusive of almost all the relevant areas relating to YPS. However, it is limited to a brief review of each area/issue.

1.2.2. Methodology

The content of the report is based mainly on the findings from the three previous studies delivered by Search-Yemen, YWBOD and partners, supported by the UNFPA under the 'Furthering the YPS Agenda in Yemen project', i.e. Baseline Assessment for the YPS Project (baseline), Felix & FAF, 2019; [Youth-Led CSOs and Groups Critical Mapping Review \(CMR\) in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb, Search-Yemen, 2019](#); [Youth-led CSOs, Initiatives and Network Mapping Report in Sana'a and Dhamar, YWBOD, 2020](#), the [five Youth Consultation Meetings on YPS \(CMs\), Search-Yemen, 2019](#) and [Sana'a and Dhamar Youth Consultation Meetings on YPS \(CMs\), YWBOD, 2020](#). The CMR of the youth led-CSOs and groups was done through surveying and profiling [278](#) formal CSOs and [259](#) informal youth groups, in addition to [277](#) individual youths across [six](#) governorates ([Sana'a, Aden, Hadhramout, Ma'rib, Taiz and Dhamar](#)). Besides, the support and integration with findings from tens of other relevant

⁷ *Ibid*

studies, reports, articles, websites, and publications from several actors working on Yemeni issues. Additionally, communication with related institutions to gather relevant information was held. During the CMR and the CMs some questions were added to the tools intentionally to feed into this situational analysis, following the same methodology and tools described in both activities.

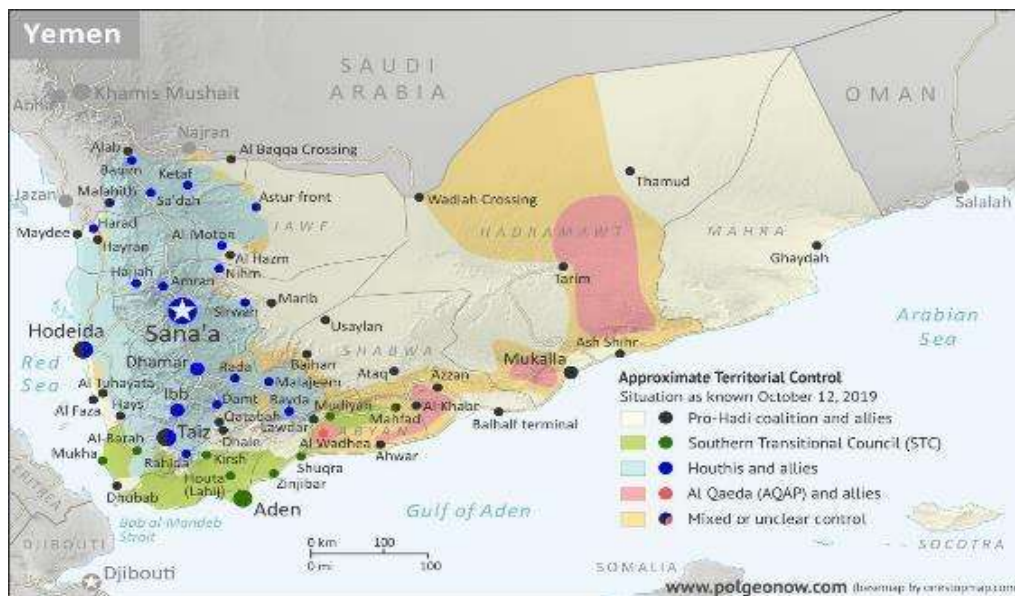
1.2.3. Limitations

The main limitations to this analysis were:

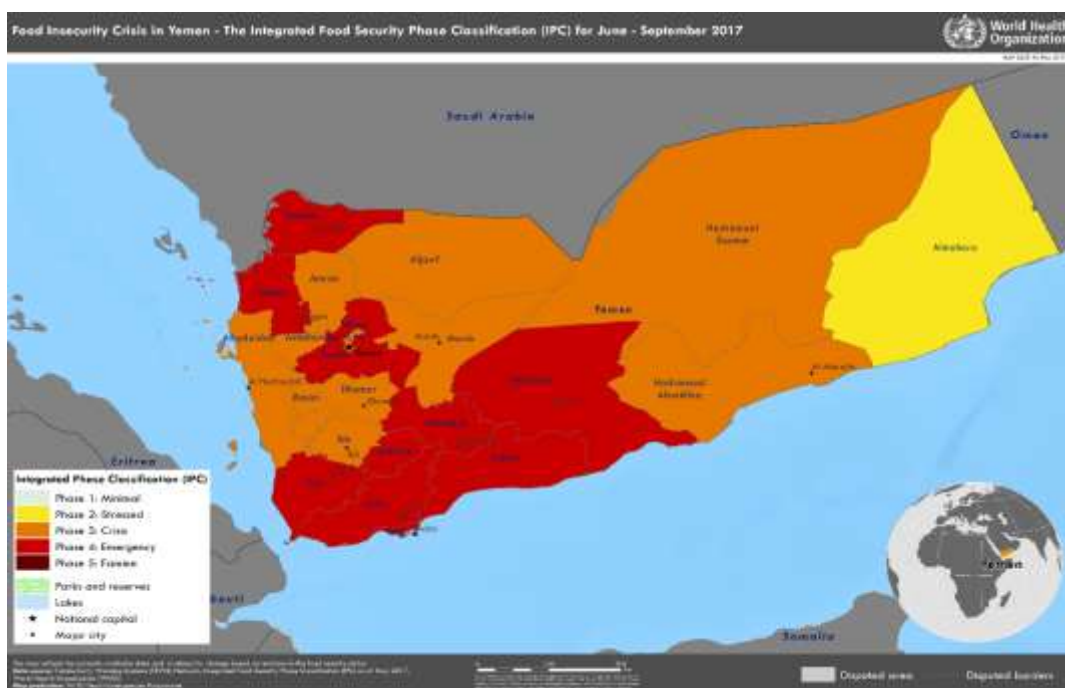
- 1- The lack of published reports regarding the recent peace interventions in the country especially those in relation to the UNSCR 2250.
- 2- Most of the national youth initiatives/entities under governmental bodies have been split in two due to the existence of two opposing governments and we faced difficulties in obtaining the required documents/data about those initiatives/entities for the analysis.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT ANALYSIS

This section aims to shed light on the current macro and micro context of the Yemeni youth that will help highlight the main issues of focus towards enabling and empowering youth as peace-makers. This section will review the major youth related challenges and threats, pointing out the main opportunities for youth resilience and survival.



Map 1 Areas control as of October 12, 2019 (Source: www.polgeonow.com)



Map 2 IPC classification of the Yemeni Areas due to Sept. 2017 (Source: WHO)

2.1. Country Profile

Referring to the two maps placed above, they give a first glance at the horrific situation in Yemen at present. 1) A country that is split apart under the control of several armed groups and militias, which are fighting each other endlessly, and 2) An illustration expressing one of the worst Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) emergency classes.

Prior to the escalation of conflict in 2015, development in Yemen was strained. A country of 30 million people, Yemen ranked: (a) 153rd on the Human Development Index (HDI); (b) 138th in extreme poverty; (c) 147th in life expectancy; (d) 172nd in educational attainment; and, (e) was in the World Bank low-middle income category. Projections suggest that Yemen would not have achieved any of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 even in the absence of conflict.⁸

The conflict in Yemen in March of 2015 has resulted in massive casualties, a wave of IDPs, substantial infrastructure damage, and hampered service delivery across both the economy and society. It has been classified as the worst man-made crisis in the world according to UNOCHA,⁹ leaving around 80% of the population food insecure, displacing over 3.6 million people, destroying key infrastructure including major roads and bridges, debilitating power lines and service provision, and halting oil and gas production for months, resuming roughly a year after the start of the conflict. An untold number of Yemenis have died from second-order effects, including the collapse of the health system and shortages of food, water, and medicine.¹⁰ The UN estimates that an average of 75 people have been killed or injured every day since the start of the conflict.¹¹

Historically: Yemen has a long history of conflicts, mainly internal political struggles and competition for power and resources. Reviewing the history of Yemen since the 26th of

⁸ UNDP, *Assessing the Impact of War on Development in Yemen*, 2019

⁹ www.unocha.org/yemen

¹⁰ Aclcd, *Press Release: Over 100,000 Reported Killed In Yemen War*, Aclcddata, 31 October 2019.

<https://www.aclcddata.com/2019/10/31/press-release-over-100000-reported-killed-in-yemen-war/>, accessed 23 January 2020; DTM IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'Yemen Area Assessment Round 37', Displacement.iom.int, March 2019. <https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/Yemen%20Area%20Assessment%20Round%2037.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=5295>, accessed 23 January 2020.

¹¹ OCHA. "2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview." Reliefweb. United Nations, Jan. 2017. Web. 19 June 2017.

September 1962 revolution until now, shows an armed conflict or a political uprising at least once each decade.¹² In addition to the common limited scale tribal-tribal or tribal-governmental conflicts that Yemen has been familiar with, the encyclopaedia Wikipedia alone listed around 15 national wars and crises since 1962 until now¹³ in Yemen “The current war is only the latest eruption in a



Photo 3 A destroyed zone in Taiz as a result of the fighting (2015) (Photo)

cycle of violence that has shaken Yemen repeatedly for nearly 60 years,”¹⁴ which has affected national stability and every aspect of life, hindering the country’s development in general. However, the last conflict, March 2015- present, has had a direct negative impact on almost all of the country.

Politically: Yemen has been unstable, with a political crises/power change at least every 10 years. The longest period of real political stabilization was between the periods 1997 after parliamentary elections, in which the General People’s Conference (GPC) won the election and served in government until 2012, after the 2011 crisis and the change of the then president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was replaced by Abdu Rabo Hadi. The political situation went back to unclearness and ambiguity until 2014, when *Ansar Allah* took over control of Sana’a and replace the governmental system with their Supreme Revolutionary Committee (SRC), although the Hadi government remains internationally recognized as the legitimate government of Yemen. The country is currently under different governmental systems affecting all types of governmental services across the country. However, a common feature of all the governmental systems in Yemen, past and present, is the dominance of the elder generations with little or no real opportunities for youth to take part.

¹² Gerald M. Feierstein, (2019) *Yemen: The 60-year War*, Policy Paper, The Middle East Institute, 2019, 2.

¹³ قائمة صراعات اليمن, https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/قائمة_صراعات_اليمن, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

¹⁴ Ibid

Economic: Yemen is a poor country with limited resources for its population numbering around 28 million people.¹⁵ Oil production used to supply 70% of the country's total budget, but this production has collapsed due to the conflict. The unemployment rate has doubled due to a crash in the labour market and the cut in public sector pay, which provides either a total or partial income for 30% of households.¹⁶ On the other hand, the conflict has dramatically reduced the size of the private sector, causing around 20% of full time employees and around 28% of part time employees to lose their jobs, compared to employment levels prior to the 2015 conflict.¹⁷

According to our critical mapping (see [Youth Profile](#), [CMR](#) & [CMs](#) sections below), youth in the **Socio-cultural** view are seen as immature and not to be relied upon on critical issues such as making-peace or taking national level decisions, as was highlighted in several recent studies.¹⁸ Furthermore, youth are seen by the community and the armed groups as just followers and as a means for attaining their goals.

Legally, the word 'Youth' is almost absent from the constitution of the Republic of Yemen except for one statement under item No. (30) stating that, "The government protects motherhood and children and care for children and youth."¹⁹ Rights, duties and other topics are tackled in the constitution under the term 'citizen' in general, with no reference to, or dedicated articles for youth in particular. The legal system also only rarely has references to 'youth', except for establishing some national initiatives for youth (see National Initiatives below). A good opportunity was through the Yemeni "Children and Youth National Strategy 2006-2015".²⁰ However, this strategy was interrupted in 2011 with the start of the Yemeni crisis. So updating and renewing the strategy for the coming era might be beneficial for youth.

¹⁵ الجمهورية اليمنية, <https://data.albankaldawli.org/country/YE>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

¹⁶ Sharad Tandon and Tara Vishwanath, *Evolution of Poor Food Access over the Course of the Conflict in the Republic of Yemen*, Policy Research Working Paper, 8813, World Bank Group, April 2019.

¹⁷ Sofan, Sami A. 2019. Ibid

¹⁸ CMR, CMs.

¹⁹ دستور الجمهورية اليمنية, <https://www.yemen-nic.info/yemen/dostor.php>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

²⁰ Children and Youth National Strategy, 2006-2015, Yemen.

In regards to education, the conflict has resulted in greater destruction of the overall educational system, which was already weak.²¹ The system has been affected in multiple ways: 1) airstrikes and ground fighting frequently damage school infrastructure; 2) unpaid teacher salaries or low teacher salaries that cause teachers to seek work elsewhere; 3) families are more likely to prevent children, especially girls, from attending school due to danger accessing schools,²² and 4) many schools have been occupied either by IDPs or military fighters. Around 25% of school age children are not able to attend school.²³ An estimated 2,500 schools are out of use due to being destroyed, closed, or occupied by IDPs or armed forces, leading to a 20 per cent increase in unenrolled children since the beginning of the conflict.²⁴ The education system was attacked first in the 2011 crisis under the slogan “la dirasah wala tadrees hata yasqut alra’ais” i.e. “No learning no teaching till the president falls”, calling on students and teachers to stop going to schools, which affected the formal education system in governmental schools, vocational institutes, and universities. Then the second shock came with the current conflict starting with the suspension of teacher’s salaries, the cutting of the operational budget for schools, and the attacking of schools. From the point of view of the war actors, the weaker the educational system, the greater the dropout rate, and so the greater the number fighters they can recruit.

Conflict and civil society, freedom and rights: Among the negative consequences of the conflict is greater restrictions and challenges to civil society work. “Yemeni activists, journalists, lawyers, and rights defenders worry about arrest, harassment, targeted violence, and joining the list of Yemen’s “disappeared.”²⁵ Other cases were reported by Human Rights’ Watch (HRW), accusing all fighting parties of abuses, such as the detaining of students,

²¹ Care International, OXFAM Great Britain, and the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) of the IASC. “Conflict and Gender Relations in Yemen”, November 2016, <https://www.care-international.org/files/files/YemenGenderReport171116.pdf>.

²² Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Safeguard Yemen’s Future: Protect Education from Attack*, (New York, February 2019).

²³ الطاقة الشمسية لحماية مستقبل آلاف الأطفال اليمنيين, <https://www.albankaldawli.org/ar/news/feature/2019/09/05/solar-power-can-safeguard-the-future-for-thousands-of-yemeni-children>, (05 September 2019), Last accessed December 5, 2019.

²⁴ UNDP report 2019, *Ibid*

²⁵ HRW, *Yemen Events of 2019*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/yemen>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

human rights defenders, journalists, and perceived political opponents by *Ansar Allah* and the Yemeni government, highlighting that *Ansar Allah* authorities “cracked down further on dissent in areas under their control after Houthis killed former president Saleh.”²⁶ Both national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have exposed the increase in arbitrary arrests, detentions, enforced disappearances and other rights’ violations since the current conflict escalated in 2015, with journalists, HR defenders, and civil society activists being targeted by both *Ansar Allah* and coalition forces on the grounds of their perceived political opinions.²⁷ Furthermore, the UNDP report highlights that the chaos and violence since 2015—and already entrenched gender inequality—have had severe impacts. The war has resulted in increased rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and child marriage.²⁸ Equal Rights Trust (ERT) alone documented around 6000 cases of human right abuses since the beginning of the conflict until 2017,²⁹ which has likely only increased.

Civil society work has also been constrained further by travel restrictions put in place by the coalition and by *Ansar Allah* and other armed groups. This problem is faced by both national CSOs and INGOs, including the UN, and is more severe for peace interventions. In *Ansar Allah* areas, those restrictions are even tighter. Civil society has become almost immobile due to requirements to obtain security permission for every single activity, whether it is an intervention or just simply a meeting. Permission requests can take months, and the requests are normally rejected. Even after the permission is issued on the central level it has to go through the same process again at the governorate and then district level. In addition, establishing youth groups, networks, or initiatives is considered suspicious and youth can become subject to investigation and/or detention.

Young people and war: Although both Yemeni and international laws define 18 as the minimum age for military service, it is publicly known that armed groups in Yemen are recruiting children and younger youth to fight. Human Rights Watch has documented many

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ ERT, “From Night to Darker Night: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Yemen”, 2018.

²⁸ UNDP, “Assessing the impact of war in Yemen”, 2019.

²⁹ ERT, “Documentation of 6000 Human Rights Abuse in Yemen between 2015-2017”, 2018.

cases of children being used as soldiers by all parties.³⁰ The UN recorded at least 842 cases of recruitment and use of boys as young as 11, nearly two-thirds of which were attributed to *Ansar Allah* forces.³¹ A UNICEF report published on November 8, 2016, estimates that **two-thirds** of the fighters on the



front lines in Yemen are under the age of 18.³² Some reports indicate that financial payments by the Houthis were used as incentives for the recruitment of children.³³ Furthermore, the photos of soldiers killed in fighting (referred to as martyrs by the fighting groups) show how young some of them are.

On the other hand, the conflict has other negative consequences on young people such as displacement, dropping out of school, being forced to work or to take on responsibility for their families due to the absence, injury, or death of their fathers in the fighting. Women and children make up three-quarters of the displaced, and one-fifth of IDP and host community households are headed by girls younger than 18 years old.³⁴

Photo 4 Child soldiers hold weapons during a demonstration in Yemen in March, 2015.(Photo: Reuters)

Yemen has experienced severe issues with its power supply, especially in densely populated areas, which has restricted the use of electrical devices and access to the internet. According to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), 90% of the population has lost connection to the public electricity network.³⁵ Furthermore, the current increase in

³⁰ HRW, *Yemen Events of 2019*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/yemen>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

³¹ UN General Assembly Security Council, *Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General*, <https://undocs.org/en/s/2018/465>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

³² <http://www.ylgyemen.org/topic.php?id=22#.XcpZglczY2w>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

³³ UN General Assembly Security Council, *Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General*, <https://undocs.org/en/s/2018/465>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

³⁴ Ibid

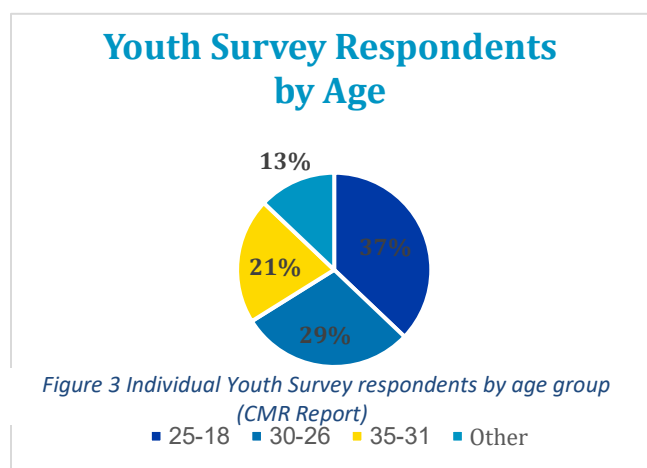
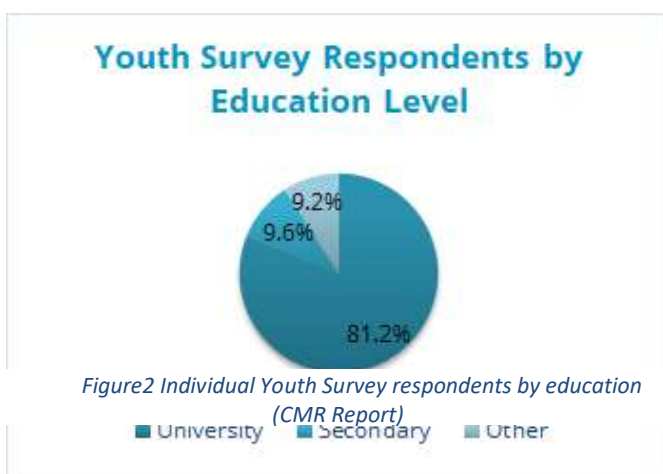
³⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/YSEU-41-Arabic.pdf>, Last accessed December 9, 2019.

the prices of network providers and restrictions against local networks added to youth difficulties in using the Internet, which has been identified as one of the challenges to youth partnership empowerment for UNSCR 2250 operationalization (See [CMs](#) below).

Decline of development indicators in Yemen: Yemen has occupied the lower ranks of the various global indexes for many years. However, the current conflict, 2015-present, has caused Yemen to fall even further in all aspects of the different rankings, including the Global Hunger Index³⁶, Transparency International, and Fragile States Index³⁷ amongst others. This is coupled with the decline in freedom, human rights, community service, and investment opportunities. In brief, as the UNDP report states, due to the current conflict, “Two decades of Human Development (have) already (been) lost.”³⁸

2.2. Yemeni Youth Profile

This section was based mainly on the findings from the [CMR](#) (particularly the individual youth survey and FGDs), in the governorate of Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb and the Mapping Report in Sana’a and Dhamar, in which around 277 individual youths were surveyed and 95 participated in seven FGDs. The female participation reached 35% in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb, while 45% in Sana’a and Dhamar. The average age of respondents was 26-30 years old in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb, while 78% in Sana’a and Dhamar was 18-35 years old. The



³⁶ <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/>

³⁷ <https://fragilestatesindex.org/>

³⁸ UNDP, “Assessing the impact of war on Development in Yemen”, 2019. UNPD news broadcast, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/news/2019/UNDP_Yemen_Report.html,

majority of respondents held university degrees or were university students as illustrated in the following figures.³⁹

In addition to that, findings from the CMs and tens of relevant reports and studies on youth in general, and Yemeni youth in particular, have been integrated within.

In Yemen, youth occupy a vast demographic category among the total populations. Based on the population projection of the NPC 2005-2025 (considering medium Fertility and medium mortality), in the year 2020 the total population of the country will reach around 30,411,000, of which 11,529,000 will be between 15-35 years old (GYG), around 38% of the total population.⁴⁰

2.2.1. Youth Capacities, Needs & Challenges (SWOT Analysis)

This section presents a quick SWOT Analysis to provide a clearer picture of the current Yemeni youth situation in relation to their expected role in the peacebuilding process and UNSCR 2250 operationalization.

a) Strengths:

The key strengths for Yemeni youth are:

- **They are the largest population group:** Yemen is one of the youngest countries in terms of population, with the GYG 15-35 constituting around 38% of the total population, as mentioned earlier.
- **Self-motivated:** several studies and articles highlighted that Yemeni youth are self-motivated to volunteer and work on community issues.⁴¹ Visiting some websites such as "[Youth Initiative Guide](#)"⁴² shows how many groups and initiatives have been formed by youth themselves to serve their community's needs or to response to

³⁹ Cited from the CMR report.

⁴⁰ Projecting Youth population based on the projection of the Yemeni National Population Center, <https://www.npc-ts.org/>, last accessed Dec., 2019.

⁴¹ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/what-do-yemeni-youth-want>
- <https://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/youth-volunteers-yemen-provide-hope-during-conflict>
- <http://www.ylg-yemen.org/yigs-sections.php>

⁴² <https://www.youthinitiativesguides.com/>

urgent issues. Though not all the youth groups and initiatives have been published there. It is noticeable for anyone researching in Yemen how responsive youth are in terms of volunteering for research. Even during the conflict, they have made a lot of effort to help their communities, whether through distributing food,⁴³ supporting education, or taking responsibility for serving the community.⁴⁴ This motivation can facilitate increasing their involvement and engagement more widely.

- **Eager for peace:** several surveys and studies,⁴⁵ including the recent baseline, [CMR](#), and [CMs](#) under this project, prove that the majority of Yemeni youth are interested in peace and enthusiastic to participate and work for establishing peace in the country. As cited from the CMR, 100% of the individual youths (N=277), and 90% of the CSOs leaders (N=278) and Youth Groups leaders (N=259) expressed their interest in participating voluntarily in peace-making activities, suggesting a long list of things they can do in this regards, similar findings were concluded from the FGDs and the CMs. This feature can help in expanding peace-making interventions and activities and facilitate youth engagement in them (See the [Youth and Peace](#) section below).
- **Resilient:** the incidents since 2011 until the present (including the 2011 uprising, the Hadi government era, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), *Ansar Allah* overwhelming the governments, and the 2015 war), were each accompanied by tremendous change in the system and daily practices. However, people in general and youth in particular, attempted to adapt with the changes and to cope with them. This may indicate that Yemeni youth are flexible to change. Youth were able to cope with each of these changes, showing high resiliency to the challenges. This, in turn, may ease their active participation in peacebuilding processes.
- **Educated:** though not adequately matching the labour market needs, and is not generally applicable to all youth, Yemeni youth, especially in urban areas, have opportunities to pursue their higher studies in general. The recent surveys within the

⁴³ Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security, UN, 2018.

⁴⁴ <https://www.irfaasawtak.com/>, Last accessed December 9, 2019.

⁴⁵ Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security, UN, 2018.

YPS⁴⁶ project showed that the majority of the respondents are university students, graduates, and post-graduates (see the section on [CMR](#) and [CMs](#) later, and the introduction of this section above).

- **Mostly non-partisan:** although the voices most often heard are of those belonging to either of the armed groups owing to those groups' control of the media, the majority of the youth population are non-partisan to any of the conflicting parties. This will support their peace promotion efforts in the community and people's perception and acceptance of their work.
- **Self-awareness:** several youth studies showed that Yemeni youth recognize their needs and wants, and that they are motivated to participate in capacity building activities if they get the opportunity (See [CMR](#) and [CMs](#) below).

b) Weaknesses:

Despite the points of strength listed earlier, Yemeni youth also suffer from some critical points of weakness that prevent their active participation in national issues including peace processes. Donors and interested organizations are encouraged to work on those points of weaknesses to help youth play an active and positive role in the peacebuilding and development fields.

The main weaknesses are:

- **Capacity shortage:** according to 90% of the participants in the CMR, youth lack the capacity to be able to participate actively in the peace-making process and/or in leadership decision-making positions. The same idea was concluded from the seven CMs. There seems to be a global agreement regarding youth capacity building as a necessity for increasing their role and participation as concluded from different reports including "The Missing Peace Report"⁴⁷ produced by the UNFPA. One of the issues most highlighted by Yemeni youth at almost every opportunity was the need to build their capacity in skills related to the peace process. The main skills highlighted

⁴⁶ CMR, CMs

⁴⁷ UNFPA and PBSO, *The Missing Peace Report*, 2018, <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>, last accessed Jan. 20th, 2020.

by youth were:⁴⁸ Labour market related skills such as vocational and professional skills; personal skills such as: leadership, planning, problem-solving, decision taking, and life-saving skills; social skills such as: communication, collaboration, negotiation, and networking skills; and specific skills such as: peacebuilding/conflict management skills and skills for establishing/running youth initiatives.

- **Poverty:** as discussed above poverty has historically been prevalent in Yemen and is currently even higher due to the ongoing conflict, the cut in salaries, and the damage to the private sector and people's livelihoods. Armed groups use this situation to their advantage, to recruit vulnerable youth, who need an income to support themselves and often their families as well (see [Youth and Conflict](#) below). Moreover, youth are often too occupied with work to earn a living and support their families, so have less time to get involved in peacebuilding work.

c) Opportunities:

Fortunately, there are many current and potential opportunities for Yemeni youth if they are supported and have access to them. The main opportunities are:

- **The free education system:** despite being of low quality and lacking resources, Yemeni youth enjoy access to free education at all levels: primary, high school, university and vocational training. This advantage makes it easier for youth to pursue their education as far as they are willing to.
- **The interest of active peace actors in supporting youth:** efforts led by the UN and various international and national actors give special attention to youth empowerment. This provides Yemeni youth with the opportunity to access support, trainings and be empowered.
- **The UNSCR (2250, 1325):** So far, no existing roadmap to localize these resolutions by the state actors. However, for youth, the two resolutions are opportunities for young men and women engagement in peacebuilding as Yemen is a UN member and has to adhere to its resolutions.
- **Availability of active and efficient youth lead CSOs and initiatives:** An existing tendency of establishing and forming youth-led CSOS and initiatives since 2011, taking youth's engagement

⁴⁸ As concluded from the baseline assessment, CMR, and CMs.

in civil aspects as one of their fields of work. This is an opportunity for young men and women to have better engagement and civil participation.

- **Community eagerness for peace:** People are fade up the war with a desire for peace and secured life. This is an opportunity for implementing extensive peacebuilding community activities.

- **Social media and online applications:** Access to internet and social media is increasingly. This is a good opportunity for accessing young men and women to be engaged with less effort and time.

-

d) Threats/Challenges:

- **The ongoing conflict:** this is the most extreme threat, because as the conflict continues, the impact on all Yemenis, including youth, becomes more and more severe. The UNDP report predicts the situation will severely deteriorate if the war continues into 2022 and more so if it reaches 2030.⁴⁹ The conflict is destroying the future of children and youth.

- **Dominance of the elder generation:** the domination of the elder generations in all decision-making positions, even in civil society work, limits the possibilities for youth to take part in decision-making and to reach leadership positions. This has led to high levels of frustration among youth.

“Peace is the responsibility of leaders and important people who can take decision. Youth are helpless and have no power to force anything,” A Female FGD participant in Ma’rib declared. (Quoted from the CMR report)

- **Armed groups’ restrictions on youth work:** as explained earlier under ‘Conflict and Civil Society’, youth’s independent and volunteer work is considered suspicious and can become subject to investigation and harassment from armed groups in their areas of control. This will greatly hinder active participation and involvement by youth in peace interventions, especially within the *Ansar Allah* areas.

- **Peace activities clearance:** in some areas of the country, like; Sana’a and Dhamar, peace, peace-related and even youth-targeting activities are too sensitive for the authorities and decision-makers. This complicates allowing the implementation of such activities.

⁴⁹ UNDP, “The Impact of War on the Development in Yemen,” 2019.

- **Tendency for joining armed groups:** despite having a lot of non-partisan youth, there are some who join the armed groups because they believe in the power of the armed group and so decide to support them. This group of youth, despite being a minority, join the war passionately and fight without limits (see [Youth and Conflict below](#)).
- **Human rights abuse and arbitrary detention:** as discussed above in the [Country Profile](#), youth, especially activists, are subject to abuse from the fighting parties. Moreover, they can be arrested and/or forcibly disappeared due to their activities or just for expressing their opinion. Many reports say that different parties are not compliant with international humanitarian laws,⁵⁰ which makes youth at risk when working on peace activities.

“Some youth are restricted to their thoughts and their parties only”.
“War has divided the youth themselves”.
“If the Houthis know, they might hurt us”.
“Absence of independent youth voices, against armed parties’ youth voices”.
“Some youth are involved in supporting either of the parties”
“Some youth have benefited from the war”.
Selected quotes from youth survey within the CMR.

- **The spread of drugs and weapons:** in the CMs, youth pointed out that the spread of drugs and weapons are amongst the key barriers to establishing the prevention and protection pillars of UNSCR 2250.⁵¹ They propose that efforts should be doubled to fight these two risks.
- **Discrimination against women:** Discrimination against women is a particularly clear threat to harmonized participation, partnership, and engagement of youth. This contributes to polarizing the society and stands as an obstacle to women’s participation in the country’s political configurations. See [Consultation Meetings](#) section for more on this.
- **Media war:** Using media to engrave the war and violence ideology is of great negative impact not only on youth, but the community as a whole. This causes youth's involvement in the conflict and reduces the potentiality of youth's protection in general.

⁵⁰ Search, UNFPA, Youth CMs on YPS reports, 2019; Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/yemen>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

⁵¹ Youth CMs on YPS reports IBID

- **The deteriorating economy:** The deteriorating economy is a reasons behind making youth working hard to maintain their basic life's needs. Looking for economic opportunities becomes a youth's priority rather than other activities like peacebuilding or volunteerism.
- **Social culture:** Yemeni youth has been socially marginalized from participating in public life as they are treated by the society as not capable to be involved in public affairs. Young men and women working in peacebuilding are facing pressure by their families and tribes. This actually makes it difficult for youth to find their way to be more active in public life.
- **Lack of awareness on UNSCR2250:** local community members and youth themselves are not well aware of the concepts related to peace and social cohesion and the UNSCR 2250.
- **Weak capacities:** youth led CSOs and initiatives face a challenge of their weak capacities to design and implement peace related projects. There is also a shortage of qualified experts and trainers on the UNSCR 2250 to fill the gap of the weak capacities.
- **Gap between youth CSOs and Initiatives:** youth initiative leaders highlighted the weak coordination between their initiatives and the youth lead CSOs.

2.2.2. Youth and Conflict

When a country experiences widespread destruction and deterioration of democratic rule, youth become the fuel of war and “most violent acts are committed by youth”, who are directed by entities such as governments and/or local/religious/sectorial leaders.⁵² Yemen is not an exception, especially with the high percentage of GYG, representing about 38% of the country's total population (See [Youth Profile](#) above). The destruction of the education system, the cut of salaries within the governmental systems, and the dramatic decline in the labour market due to the current conflict in Yemen makes joining armed groups an appealing income-generating option as “armed groups are basically seen as the easy way out by youth who do not have an [economic] alternative.”⁵³ In the progress study for YPS, a highlighted quotes states, “We young people have three opportunities: to die assassinated, to migrate,

⁵² Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security, UNSC, 2018, P:5, <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>, last accessed Jan. 20th, 2020.

⁵³ UNDP report, IBID; “Youth, Peace, and Security in the Arab States Region: A Consultation and High-level Dialogue”, Meeting report, Amman December 2016.

or to join a gang.”⁵⁴ Moreover, younger youth and even children occupy a high proportion of the fighters within all the fighting groups (see Children and War under the [Country Profile](#) above).

On the other hand, some youth have been deceived by the extremist rhetoric and the hate speech broadcasted by all the armed groups against each other, especially those with low levels of education (See [Consultation Meetings](#) section below).⁵⁵ A UNDP report identified three main reasons for youth to join the armed groups: a) poverty, as described above; b) injustice, some youth groups feel injustice from the community or the government such as the Muhamasheen; and c) physical vulnerability and low education.⁵⁶

“There won’t be peace while ‘Ga’aribah’ are existing” (referring to the Southern Movement).

“Peace cannot be established as long as those invaders from the South are camping in our land (Hadhramout)” referring to a governmental military camp.

“Taiz can rest in peace after getting Islah party out of it” Referring to all Islah members in Taiz.

Selected quotes from the youth survey (CMR Report).

2.2.3. Youth, Peacebuilding, and UNSCR 2250

As youth can be the fuel of war, they also can be the peace-makers. This has been reflected in different UN initiatives (See [International Initiatives](#) below), including UNSCR 2250 and the United Network of Young (UNOY) Peacebuilders. They can play a critical role in building sustainable peace and shifting energy towards development if guided well. Without youth, fighting groups may not be able to carry on their war, and may mostly submit to the necessity of peace. Thus, youth can be key peace stakeholders from different perspectives. Starting from promoting peace within their local contexts, or working as mediators to solve community conflicts, to sharing in decision making in the peace dialogues.

Recent studies have shown that the majority of youth are interested in peace and are well-motivated to participate actively in peacebuilding.⁵⁷ The same was concluded from the CMR and CMs on YPS within this project, where youth put forward lists of suggestions on how they can participate in the peace process, such as: delivering awareness raising sessions,

⁵⁴ Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security, IBID, P:6

⁵⁵ CMs report.

⁵⁶ FGD, the role of youth in PCVE Yemen, UNDP, 2017.

⁵⁷ UNSC, *Progress Study on Youth, Peace & Security*, 2018, <https://www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy>, last accessed Jan. 20th, 2020.

organizing advocacy campaigns, educating or training others...etc.⁵⁸ However, almost all their suggestions for participation were within those types of activities. Their answers collectively show a lack of knowledge on how to take the lead, participate in decision-making or peace dialogues. *“The community looks at us as being less experienced, and so marginalize the youth role and neglect what youth suggest for peacebuilding”*, a female online youth survey respondent from Taiz wrote.⁵⁹ However, youth are highly motivated to participate in peacebuilding processes in general.

Regarding UNSCR 2250, the CMR survey showed that the majority of youth (whether individuals or those representing CSOs or groups) claimed an awareness of UNSCR 2250 and its benefits for youth. They get their awareness mostly through recent interventions delivered in their areas within the four targeted governorates on the CMR. It also showed that awareness of UNSCR 2250 among male youth is higher than that among female youth.

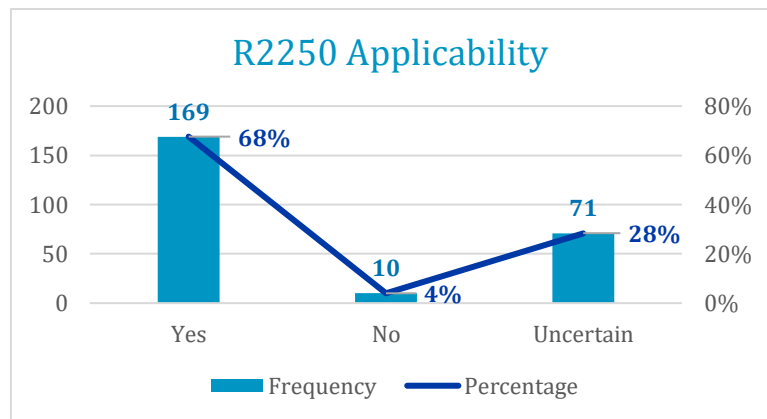


Figure 1- Youth perception of UNSCR 2250 applicability in their context (CMR report)

Girls in Yemen have less opportunities for participating in public activities due to the conservative nature of society. Such limited opportunities are even more limited during crises as it is with the current conflict.⁶⁰ Figure 4 presents that 68% of the surveyed youth (N=250) in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb believed that UNSCR 2250 is applicable within their current context despite the difficulties, while 28% are uncertain and only 4% believed that it might not applicable.⁶¹ The CMs and the FGDs also saw a similar result. Youth are also highly enthusiastic to be part of operationalizing and promoting the resolution.

⁵⁸ See [Critical Mapping Review](#), and [Consultation Meetings](#) sections below.

⁵⁹ CMR report.

⁶⁰ FGD, the role of youth in PCVE, IBID.

⁶¹ CMR report.

The following list has been gathered from youth's suggestions on the best ways to promote and operationalize UNSCR 2250):

1. Dialogue sessions between the youth and the elder generation.
 2. Using coffee shops and other youth-gathering areas to promote the UNSCR 2250.
 3. Adopting the resolution by organizations.
 4. Apply sports and arts for peace activities.
 5. Invest in sustainable development.
 6. Involve youth in developmental activities such as Cash for Work.
 7. Using round table discussions to promote and operationalize 2250.
 8. Address current conflicts on the community level.
 9. Involve the government.
 10. Re-launching elections and supporting youth to participate in those elections.
 11. Introduce the resolution into the formal teaching curricula.
 12. Use drama and short film
- ????????????????????????????/

13. Promoting the UNSCR 2250 extensively at the national and local levels using: media, training courses, public events and festivals, arts, mosques, mobile apps and games.
14. Building the capacity of CSOs and youth lead initiatives on the UNSCR 2250, so they can play a effective role in operationalizing and promoting the UNSCR 2250. This is besides supporting the operational cost of these CSOs to increase its efficiency.
15. Develop a strategy with clear objectives and action plan to promote and localize the UNSCR 2250.
- 16.

CHAPTER 3: CRITICAL MAPPING REVIEW

"We are interested to work in peacebuilding, and we have been working with our support members mainly, but we would love to have partnerships with more experienced organizations to get their support" A group leader from Taiz.

The Critical Mapping Review of youth-led CSOs targeted individual youth with the aim of collecting further data to feed into this situational analysis. While the findings from the individual youth were integrated with the above sections in this report, particularly the [Youth Profile](#) section above, this section presents a summary of the findings from the formal CSOs and informal youth groups' mapping.

The review targeted four governorates: Aden, Taiz, Hadhramout, and Ma'rib. The following table presents the total number of participants in the CMR, of which around 34% were females:

Table 2: CMR respondents

	Respondents
Formal CSOs KIIs	232 243
Formal CSOs profiling	88 134
Informal Youth groups/networks KIIs	222 238
Informal Youth groups profiling	81 118
Individual youth survey	250 277
Youth FGDs participants	64 95
Totals	1078

3.1. Formal CSOs

In total, 274 formal youth-led CSOs were surveyed and mapped within the six targeted governorates (Sana'a, Taiz, Aden, Hadhramout, Mareb and Dhamar). The average age of respondents in Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb was 34 years old, while 59% in Sana'a and Dhamar are between 18-35. Women's participation in Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb reached only 29%, while it reached 51% in Sana'a and Dhamar. The education levels of the interviewed CSO leaders was mostly university degree or higher.

The main findings highlight the following:

- Even within the CSOs that are branded as 'youth-led' or working on youth and peace topics, younger youth and women have limited opportunities to hold leadership positions. The average age of the leaders in Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb was 34

with women constituting only 33%, while 59% in Sana'a and Dhamar is between 18-35 with women constituting 51%. Even though those CSOs criticized the neglect of younger youth and women from holding decision making positions within the governmental system and peace process, similar patterns can be observed within these CSOs in Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb.

- Most of the interviewed CSOs claimed previous experience in youth and peace topics, with a high rate of supporting and/or working with youth groups, and a high level of knowledge concerning the UNSCR 2250.
- In Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb, education was the most common area of work that CSOs focused on regarding youth, with 72.73%, whereas citizenship was the area they had worked on the least with 22.73% of the respondents reporting work in this field. Previous experience in the field of education was also reflected in their suggestions for more investment in it for integrating the YPS themes in general and the UNSCR 2250 in particular within formal curriculums in schools and universities. Similar conclusions were drawn from the other respondent groups within the CMR and the participants in the 5 CMs. This is also supported by the global study on "The Missing Peace,"⁶² where education is seen by youth as a key entrance point for peacebuilding. CSOs in Sana'a commonly focused on peace building and youth empowerment with 79% and 75% respectively. While in Dhamar, CSOs have focused mainly on peace building 100%, youth empowerment 85%, life skills 85%, education 85% and Training and qualification 85%.

⁶² The Missing Peace Report, IBID

- In Aden, Taiz, Hadramour and Mareb, direct experience in conflict management and peace-making scored 45.55% with types of activities limited to training, awareness raising, and educating targeted beneficiaries about those topics, as illustrated in chart below. In comparison, 45% of the total number of CSOs' working on YPS and UNSCR 2250 have a maximum experience of 2 years, 37% have 5 year experience and only 18% have more than 5 year experience.

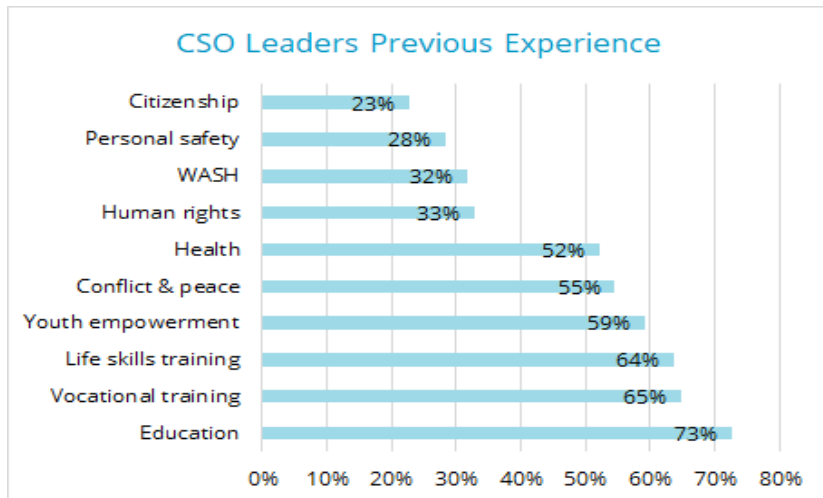


Figure 5 Areas of previous experience for youth-led CSOs (CMR Report)

- Participating CSOs showed limited understanding of the concepts of youth participation and involvement in peacebuilding activities, limiting that participation to working on promotion, awareness raising, and educating others about peace.
- CSOs responses showed that they believe more in the influence of youth groups to make change than the influence of individual youth.
- Around 74% of CSOs' leader rated their organizations' ability to deliver peacebuilding and youth interventions as being very high or high, whereas a few rated it as moderate, low, or very low. However, all the respondents revealed the same needs for support, prioritizing financial support and capacity building.
- Most of the respondents expressed their belief in the importance of a youth role in peacebuilding, but most of them failed to give a concrete justification for their beliefs, restating general sayings such as, "youth are the pillar of the nation", "youth are the heart of the community", etc. Overall, respondents did not provide practical reasoning behind the importance of youth inclusion. This may uncover the reality that even active and experienced CSOs might need to get more education on concepts of youth, peace, and expected roles in line with the UNSCR 2250.

- It has been found that the youth's capacity in peace-making skills is rated around 60%, emphasized that youth are currently not ready to play an active role in the forthcoming peace dialogues. This can be correlated with the individual youth's response that the community and elder generations views them as being trustworthy enough to take an active role in decision making and/or peacebuilding.
- Interestingly, despite their claim to have a high level of experience in youth and peace topics, only 65% of the mapped CSOs in Aden, Taiz, Hadraout and Mareb claimed to have some knowledge about the UNSCR 2250, while the mapped CSOs in Sana'a and Dhamar repeatedly confirmed the need for knowledge and skills in this field. Nonetheless, all think that the resolution can be implemented within their local context level as well as the national level.
- Finally, the CSOs put forward a wealth of suggestions and initiatives, including around 200 previously implemented initiatives that can be replicated; more than 200 proposed initiatives, more than half of which are thought to directly relate to the UNSCR 2250; and they further nominated more than 200 organizations and a similar number of individual youth whom they believe can play positive role for peace making in the country.

"The main features of informal groups are that they are flexible in terms of vision, mission, and objectives, they can be reformed according to need and they welcome that. It would be better to consider youth groups as one of the main entry points for promoting and implementing R2250." A respondent during the CMR

3.2. Informal Groups/Networks

Within the CMR, 252 informal youth groups were interviewed in the six targeted governorates. The average age of respondents in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb was 27 years old and the participation rate for women reached 36.4%. 93% of the leaders of the mapped youth groups in Sana'a and Dhamar are 18-35 years old with 50% women participation. The education level of the respondents in the six governorates was post-secondary, university, and higher.

The main findings state that:

- Youth groups showed younger youth involvement than CSOs, with the average age of group leaders being 27 in Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb and 50% of the group leaders in Sana'a and Dhamar are 18-35 years old.
- Groups were formed by youth to service various social issues and/or youth-specific issues such as education, humanitarian needs, sports, culture, peace, charity, human rights, arts, health, environmental concerns, etc. These groups were mainly established by active youth to address existing issues in their communities.
- Most of the interviewed groups claimed previous experience in terms of running awareness campaigns, holding educational sessions, running cultural/environmental sessions, charity work, solving community conflicts, and maintaining infrastructure such as by levelling roads and maintaining classrooms.
- In Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb, like CSOs' leaders, group leaders revealed limited work on peace topics, suggesting this was due to the limited number of donors focused on these topics, and to some social and political issues, as it is a sensitive topic to tackle during a conflict, especially when the groups operate in areas under the rule of one of the conflicting parties. In comprising, the mapped youth groups' leaders in Sana'a and Dhamar show having a key focus on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, but they expressed a number of challenges.
- Some declared that they had had previous partnership with formal NGOs/INGOs and a few confirmed that they were established with the help of such organizations. However, they all expressed their interest in partnerships, as they believe that working with more experienced organizations would maximize their impact.
- The main features of the informal groups are their flexibility in terms of vision, mission, and objectives, they can be reformed according to the need and they welcome that.
- Although group leaders claimed having strong links with, support from, and positive impact on their communities, they again declared that their work in the communities is not welcomed as much as that of formal CSOs. They suggested that this is due to the

"Since our start we depended only on ourselves for support, but we think it will be great if we get the chance to partner with more experienced organizations."
 Shared by a woman representative of a group from

communities' lack of trust in informal organizations and their undermining perception of youth's abilities.

- In Aden, Taiz, Hadramout and Mareb, around 78% of the financial and logistical support for their activities come from the group members themselves, which shows how effort and resources could be duplicated when investing in youth groups. In Sana'a, however, the majority (85%) of their activities are funded either by local formal CSOs or INGOs, but the case is different in Dhamar where 68% of their activities are self-funded. The youth groups in the six governorates listed a number of main challenges that they face included the lack of financial and logistical support as well as skills shortage, support for which can be provided by donors to help increase the impact of groups.
- They are highly motivated to work on peace-making processes if they get appropriate support, such as support in terms of finances, logistics, capacity building, guidance, and partnerships.
- As they do not routinely engage with international donors through funding mechanisms, it is not strange to find around half of the groups expressing their ignorance of the UNSCR 2250. But after being introduced to it, they expressed a high rate of belief in its applicability and a high rate of interest in working towards its implementation, suggesting some concrete activities for promoting and implementing the five pillars of the resolution, including:
 - Coordinate with the government at all levels (local and national), advocate for youth's engagement in several positions and provide conditional support to communities and the government for adopting each pillar.
 - Establish dedicated youth groups for advocating and promoting the UNSCR 2250 and the implementation of each of its five pillars.
- Youth Groups leaders revealed many other valuable suggestions, over 200 initiatives mostly related to the UNSCR 2250 and over 200 nominations of CSOs and individual youth who could be involved in the peace-making process as summarized in the mapping report.

CHAPTER 4: INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

4.1 International Initiatives for Youth

This section will present some high-profile international initiatives for youth that Yemeni youth could also benefit from. There are several UN agencies working in Yemen such as the UNFPA, UNDP, and UN Women. Most have dedicated strategies for youth and supporting youth in different areas, and UN publications in general indicate that youth are one of its top priorities. Most of these initiatives are based on some consultations involving Yemeni entities including women and youth. However, youth participants highlighted their concerns about the lack of direct channels of communication between them and UN missions, and they felt that their voices were not heard, even during the limited interactions that did take place. This gap also created confusion for youth regarding the work and goals of the missions, as well as the relationship with other UN agencies.

4.3 Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (UN OSGEY)

The UN established the OSGEY in 2013, with a mandate to harmonize the UN systems efforts on youth development, enhance the UN response to youth needs, as well as to bring the work of the UN with, and for youth closer to them. The UN OSGEY focuses on these three pillars: 1) Increasing youth participation in the Intergovernmental Space; 2) Realizing the potential of young people within the UN system; 3) Engagement and mobilization of young people.⁶³

⁶³ Osgey, *The Envoy's Workplan: Vision Statement*, <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/workplan/>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

4.3 UNOY Peacebuilders⁶⁴

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a global network of youth peace organisations with 116 member organisations in 55 countries. UNOY Peacebuilders works to strengthen youth participation in peacebuilding by supporting the development of its members' organisational capacity as well as individual young people's capacity as peacebuilders. The network provides opportunities for sharing and learning between youth peacebuilding organisations and ensures youth participation in international conversations around peace and security. The UNOY Peacebuilders aims at:

1. Strengthening youth-led peacebuilding initiatives.
2. Facilitating a safe space for dialogue and conflict transformation.
3. Bringing the voices of young people to policy makers to a regional and global level.
4. Supporting youth peacebuilding organizations and building their capacities.
5. Advocating for increased youth participation in peacebuilding, in the form of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 that recognizes and addresses the specific needs, assets, potentials, and experiences of youth in (post-) conflict scenarios.

4.3 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

In addition to its work with children and youth, UNICEF has several independent initiatives for youth including [Voices of Youth](#)-VOY (internet based initiatives)⁶⁵ and [Life Skills and Citizenship Education- LSCE](#) initiative for MENA youth.

a) Voices of Youth Connect:

Voices of Youth Connect promotes cross-cultural interactions between adolescents from different countries, helping them learn to work together, develop their communication and computer skills, define and articulate their positions on global advocacy issues, and become engaged global citizens. Voices of Youth Connect aims to provide youth who are excluded from the global debate with the skills and access to knowledge, methods, and tools they need to realize their rights and make an impact on their communities.

⁶⁴ <http://unoy.org/en/>, Last accessed December 5, 2019.

⁶⁵ <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/>, Last accessed December 9, 2019.

b) Life Skills and Citizenship Education Initiative (LSCE)⁶⁶:

The LSCE Initiative is led by [UNICEF](http://www.unicef.org/) in collaboration with partners at the country, regional, and global levels. It brings together the active contribution of the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([ALECSO](http://www.aecs.org/)), along with the Ministries of Education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries. The 12 core life skills for MENA region (as



Figure 6 LSCE initiative. (Source: <http://www.lsce-mena.org/>)

illustrated in figure 6) are distributed across four dimensions: the cognitive dimension or Learning to Know, the instrumental dimension or Learning to Do, the individual dimension or Learning to Be, and the social dimension or Learning to Live Together. The latter is the ethical dimension that reinforces the vision for citizenship education in MENA. It adopts a human rights-based approach consistent with democratic and social justice values and principles. In 2019, UNICEF, in collaboration with the UNFPA, started a detailed literature review and mapping for the LSCE training in Yemen as a start to customizing the LSCE framework and modules to the Yemeni context.

4.3 Department of Economic and Social Affairs Youth⁶⁷

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is one of the UN divisions that is dedicated to youth affairs. It is the UN Focal Point on Youth. The Focal Point on Youth aims to build an awareness of the global situation of young people, as well as to promote their rights and aspirations. The Focal Point also works towards greater participation of young people in decision-making as a means of achieving peace and development. This department provides different initiatives for youth including:

⁶⁶ <http://www.lsce-mena.org/>, Last accessed December 9, 2019.

⁶⁷ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/>

a) The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY):

The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. It contains proposals for action, aiming at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihoods among young people. The WPAY focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective, and constructive participation in society. It works within fifteen priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, the environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making, globalization, information and communications technology, HIV/AIDS, armed conflict, and intergenerational issues.

b) UN Youth Delegate Programme (UNYDP):

The UNYDP is a UN initiative to increase youth participation in decision-making on the international level. It works through the inclusion of youth delegates in a country's official delegation to the United Nations General Assembly and various functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The youth delegate programme is coordinated by the Focal Point on Youth at the global level, but it is the responsibility of the Member States to establish a youth delegate programme at the national level, and to decide who will represent the young people of their country. The role of a youth representative varies from country to country, but normally includes providing input to their delegation on issues related to youth and participate in their delegation's general work through attending meetings and informal negotiations. Youth delegates can participate in several intergovernmental meetings at the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

c) UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)

The IANYD is a network consisting of UN entities, represented primarily at the headquarters level, whose work is relevant to youth. The aim of the Network is to increase the effectiveness of UN work on youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all

relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of their individual strengths and unique approaches and mandates. The Network's main objectives include: a) to identify key joint priorities and plan collaboratively to implement related initiatives; b) to share good practices and expertise and to promote effective cooperation among the entities in programming at country and regional levels; c) to identify global strategic opportunities, ensure coordinated input, facilitate and support sustainable follow-up mechanisms.

4.2. National Initiatives for Yemeni Youth

In addition to free formal education in governmental schools and universities, there are a good variety of national initiatives that present opportunities for youth to get needed support, empowerment, and capacity building. Although most of them have been suspended or restricted due to the current conflict, they can be taken into consideration for being reactivated, as outlined below:

4.3 Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS)⁶⁸

The MoYS is the main governmental body concerned with youth and youth issues. It is one of the main ministries of the Yemeni government. It includes most of the national youth initiatives, federations, and funds. Its main subsidies are the Children and Youth Fund, the Youth Federation, and the Yemen Scouts and Guides Association that will be presented below. Their services include; a) gathering the energies of the youth towards the goals of the revolution and the general principles of the state, and promoting the values and concepts of national unity, b) supporting moral and spiritual values, developing loyalty to the homeland, and preserving public property, c) advancement of youth: physically, socially, and culturally, as well as highlighting their social duties, d) creating a sophisticated Yemeni sports movement and expanding its base to include the whole country to be able to represent the country honourably in all Arab, continental, and international forums, e) building youth and sports facilities and providing them with the necessary means to ensure the achievement of this objective; and f) developing the spirit of brotherhood, cooperation, and friendship between Yemen and other countries through youth and sport meetings.

⁶⁸ <http://www.yemen.gov.ye/portal/sport>, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

Their sources of funding include:

1. A government subsidy provided within the general governmental budget.
2. Legal aids and donations provided to the Fund by individuals, bodies, and local and foreign organizations.

4.3 Kids and Youth Care Fund:⁶⁹

The Fund was established by Presidential Resolution No. (10) in 1996 to be supervised by a Board Committee led by the Minister of Youth. The resolution was updated twice, most recently in 2013 by Resolution No. (13).

Their services and activities include:

1. Supporting youth sports.
2. Supporting national sport teams.
3. Support the Sports Medicine Federation and contributing to the treatment of sporting injuries.
4. Supporting rehabilitation and training programs.
5. Supporting youth activities.
6. Contributing to the establishment and maintenance of sports and youth facilities and providing any support required.
7. Granting awards and incentives to prominent (people) in the field of youth and sports.
8. Building investment facilities to achieve returns that serve the objectives for which the Fund was established.

Their sources of funding include a sustainable income through:

1. A government subsidy within the budget of the MoYS as a support to the Fund.
2. Legal gifts and donations provided to the Fund by individuals, bodies, and local and foreign organizations.
3. Proportion of the stadiums advertising revenues to be determined by the Minister of Youth and Sports.

⁶⁹ http://www.yemen-nic.info/db/laws_ye/detail.php?ID=69388, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

4. Five riyals on each pack of cigarettes manufactured locally or imported.
5. Five percent (5%) added to the Qat tax.
6. A fee of five riyals for each bag of cement (50) kg manufactured locally or imported, provided that the imported quantities are collected upon arrival through the competent banks.
7. Returns on the Fund's investments for purposes determined by the Board of Directors in accordance with current legislation.
8. (1%) for each telephone call within the fixed and mobile network (GSM and CDMA) systems to be added to the bills, Recharging Cards and instant recharging.

4.3 President Award for Youth:⁷⁰

The award was first launched in 1998 by Presidential Resolution No. (182) aiming at encouraging youth innovation and creative achievements. This resolution was replaced by Presidential Resolution No. (153) in 2003 expanding the areas and scope of the Award. It is awarded to youth under thirty years old based on certain terms and conditions. It is run by a Committee Board lead by the Minister of Youth. It is awarded on two levels: the national level and the governorate level. The last is run by a Committee Board lead by the Governor.⁷¹ The Award is granted to youth who demonstrate excellence within the field of the Holy Quran, Science and Technology, Literature and Arts. Each of these areas has different branches within. The Award consists of a certificate and a financial reward. The Award is funded by the [Kids and Youth Care Fund](#) (see [Kids and Youth Care Fund](#) above).

4.3 General Federation of Yemeni Youth

It is an NGO linked to the MoYS. It was established in 1986. Their main activities and programs include:

- 1- Contributing to a stable life for young people.
- 2- Providing an opportunity for youth to exploit their enormous potential.

⁷⁰ The name of the Award was changed by the *Ansar Allah* government in Sana'a in 2016 into the Government Prize for Youth.

⁷¹ <https://sabaanews.net/news46141.htm>, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

- 3- Working to prepare young people appropriately to meet the challenges and pressures of globalization.
- 4- Encouraging young people to take responsibility for their own education along with continuous self-learning.
- 5- Giving special attention to the needs of girls in all fields.
- 6- Giving special attention to rural youth.
- 7- Monitoring opportunities for young people to create new resources to achieve their role in development.
- 8- Bringing together the visions of youth and the financiers (individuals and organizations) in what we might call the market for innovative ideas.
- 9- Encouraging the investment spirit of the youth.
- 10- Rehabilitating and training young people to ensure that they acquire the skills required to compete in the labour market.
- 11- Searching for jobs in those areas that support conservation.
- 12- Educating young people that they are the builders of tomorrow and are not weapons or an instrument of violence and extremism.
- 13- Supporting young people in the search for a better tomorrow.
- 14- Raising the awareness of youth in health care and population issues and raising awareness of modern diseases that pose a risk, especially HIV/AIDS.

Their sources of funding include:

1. A government subsidy within the budget of the MoYS.
2. Legal aids and donations provided to the Fund by individuals, bodies, and local and foreign organizations.

4.3 Yemen Scouts & Guides Association:⁷²

It was established as an independent non-political, partisan, regional, or sectarian NGO by Presidential Resolution No. (45) in 1973, to be supervised by the MoYS. It was active until the 2000s within schools, where it maintained independent offices, then its activities started to

⁷² <https://mys-ye.com/pages/11>, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

decline, and the main office was closed in 2017. Even its official website has been suspended.⁷³ Their main objectives include the development of the scout movement in all governorates and contributing to the upbringing of boys and youth and preparing them spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically. Their sources of funding come from a government subsidy within the budget of the MoYS, and legal aids and donations provided to the Fund by individuals, bodies, and local and foreign organizations.

4.3 Skills Development fund (SDF):⁷⁴

The Fund was first established in 1995 under the name, “Vocational & Technical Training Fund” which was changed by Resolution No. (29) in 2009 to its current name, the “Skills Development Fund”. It is managed by a Committee Board formed from the private governmental sectors and supervised by the Ministry of Vocational Training ([MoVT](#)). Beside its main services to the employees in the labour market (governmental, mixed, or private) and supporting training institutes, the Fund delivers other services in relation to youth including the provision of labour market needs for skilled labour and trainings for unemployed youth to be qualified for the national as well as international labour markets.

Their source of funding comes from the following sustainable sources:

- 1- (1%) of the total monthly salaries and wages of employees paid, subject to tax and borne by the shareholder.
- 2- One YR for each imported or local bag of cement.
- 3- Two YR for each pack of local or imported cigarettes.
- 4- Five thousand YR for each work permit granted to non-Yemenis without exception or when it is renewed and is collected by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.
- 5- The State's annual support to the Fund.
- 6- Proceeds from bank deposits.
- 7- Aids, gifts, and donations provided to the Fund by local and international natural and juridical persons in a manner that does not contradict the laws in force.

⁷³ https://web.archive.org/web/20120424090446/http://www.yemenscouts.org/mor_content.asp?catid=40, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

⁷⁴ <http://www.sdf-yemen.gov.ye/>, Last accessed December 8, 2019.

4.3 Yemen Youth Government (YYG):⁷⁵

The YYG is an NGO that was initially launched in 2012 as an independent shadow government parallel to the political government of the Republic of Yemen. It is the assistance body of the supreme executive and administrative body of the state. Their activities include:

- 1- Involving youth in various aspects of comprehensive national development and enabling them to reach positions of political influence and decision-making.
- 2- Creating an effective and sustainable link between youth, state leaders, and legislators, which contributes to the consolidation of the values and concepts of citizenship, human rights, governance, and good governance among the various authorities and institutions of the state in legislation and implementation.
- 3- Forming political pressure groups on executive and legislative authorities, political parties, national and international organizations alike to ensure that youth entitlement to a decent life such as education, health, training, rehabilitation, and creating an environment that enables them to develop, innovate, and give.
- 4- Advancing comprehensive national development, with the support of the executive authorities of the State and working alongside it to improve and improve its performance and the mechanisms regulating it.
- 5- Working to develop values of loyalty and national belonging and strengthening the cultural and civilizational identities of Yemeni youth, and counteracting all forms of extremism and intolerance, to create a true Yemeni society capable of coexistence and acceptance of others.
- 6- Rehabilitating and training independent youth in theory and in practice to enable them to reach and occupy political positions within the country, and nominating one of them in each process of forming governments.

There are different initiatives that were suggested by the respondents but have not been formally launched yet, however, they could be activated and used to support youth, such as the Youth Parliament and Supreme Council for Youth that were suggested through the NDC.

⁷⁵ <http://yiig.gov.ye/>

All of these initiatives have been severely affected by the current conflict and the two governments, having two copies of each initiative/fund, one under each government. Their work has been practically suspended and the fund is being used for other purposes.

4.3 Youth Proposed initiatives

Youth participants in the CMR and CMs proposed several initiatives and intervention ideas, both for supporting/empowering youth and for operationalizing and promoting UNSCR 2250. The following table adapts and summarizes 21 unique initiatives proposed by youth in the CMR, covering five categories: peace and security, political engagement and promotion to leadership positions, economic empowerment, education, and inclusion, legal & environmental issues. Each of the below tables presents the proposed initiative, expected results from the initiative and lists potential partners for that specific initiative.

Table 3 Youth proposed initiatives for enhancing peace and security/UNSCR 2250 (CMR & CMs Reports)

Peace and Security/UNSCR 2250		
Proposed Initiative:	Expected results	Potential partners
1- Supreme Council of Youth Peace Makers: Establishing a supreme council for youth dedicated to peace-making on the national as well as local levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supreme Council on the national level is formed. - # of local councils formed on the governorates level. - # of youth peacemakers joining the council. - # of governmental policies supporting the Council issued. - # of youth peace ambassadors qualified. - # of conflicts managed by the youth peacemakers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies, peace donors and INGOs, Youth-CSOs/groups, Government.
2- UNSCR 2250 Youth Network: Forming dedicated youth groups on the district/village levels for promoting and operationalizing UNSCR 2250, with a national level network dedicated to the same purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of UNSCR 2250 dedicated youth groups formed. - 1 Network established. - # of youth trained and qualified on UNSCR 2250. - # of sessions about UNSCR 2250 delivered. - # of operationalizing policies for UNSCR 2250 issued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies, Search-Yemen, GIZ and other peacebuilding donors/INGOs, - Youth CSOs/groups, - Government and local councils.
3- Safe Spaces Network:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of youth groups formed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local councils, donors and

<p>Forming a number of local youth groups aimed at creating and running safe spaces for women and children in which women and children can get capacity building in different related areas and where they can feel safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of safe spaces created and run by youth groups. - # of women and children benefitting from the safe spaces. 	<p>INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.</p>
<p>4- Arts and media for peace: Creating innovative artwork and media content that promotes peace and acceptance of others. Encouraging national media to replace hate speech that incites violence with content that calls for peaceful collaboration and acceptance of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of artworks created. - # of media broadcasts. - # of national media organisations cooperating with the initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Media (MoM), Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) & MoYS within the two governments, private media, UN agencies, peace donors/ INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.
<p>5- Inclusive peace agenda Aiming at involving citizens at local levels in local dialogues for peace through the mediation of local youth groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of local peace dialogues held. - # of local citizen involved in the dialogues. - # of issues solved through these dialogues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local councils, religious bodies/figures, community figures, donors/INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.
<p>6- Peace Cyclists: A group of cyclists raising banners for peace and promoting peace making a journey crossing all the governorates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of cyclists involved. - # of youth groups cooperating with them. - # of cities crossed. - # of sessions held per city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies and other donors, youth CSOs/groups.
<p>7- Youth against the recruitment of child soldiers: Campaigning against the recruitment of children within any of the fighting parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of youth groups formed to serve the initiative's objectives. - # of children returning from war and returning to schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies, donors/INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.

Table 4 Youth proposed initiatives for enhancing youth political & leadership empowerment

Political & leadership empowerment		
Proposed Initiative	Estimated results	Potential partners
<p>8- National Youth Leaders: Delivering leadership capacity building to youth, providing internship spaces for youth within the country's leadership positions at national and local levels, and promoting youth to leadership positions within governmental entities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of youth receiving leadership capacity building. - # of youth taking up internship opportunities. - # of governmental entities appointing youth to leadership positions. - # of youth sharing in decision-making at national and local levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN agencies, Government local NGOs.
<p>9- Girl Leaders for Peace: Creating girls' groups on the local level aiming at enabling girls to actively participate in community issues including conflict resolution and responding to community needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of girls' groups formed. - # of girls actively participating in community issues. - # of community issues with girls involved in the response. - # of local leaders/figures involved in supporting girl leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs/INGOs working on girls' issues, youth and peace issues, local councils, local leaders and figures.
<p>10- Youth Local Councils: Forming local youth councils in parallel with the official local council to support and share the decisions with the local council and promote youth elections within the local councils.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of local youth councils formed. - # of supporting policies issued. - # of issues shared between the official and local youth councils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA), local councils, UN agencies and donors, Youth CSOs.
<p>11- Youth accountability and transparency observers' network Forming a national network of district/village level youth groups to act as observers for the accountability and transparency of governmental authorities, community serving private entities, and CSOs within their local communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 network established. - # of local youth groups formed and activated. - # of related issues discussed and fixed in a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government, private sector, local council, community committees, UN agencies and concerned INGOs, and youth CSOs/groups

Table 5 Youth proposed initiatives for enhancing youth economic empowerment

Economic Empowerment:		
Proposed title	Estimated results	Potential partners

Brief		
12- Young entrepreneurs conference: Founding a reference body for supporting young entrepreneurs in the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 conference established. - # of supporting policies are issued. - # of young entrepreneurs supported per a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High authority for investment, MoT, SFD, Private sector, donors, youth CSOs/groups.
13- Youth Support Fund: Aiming at supporting unemployed youth with vocational and technical training to match the needs of the labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 fund established. - # of youth trained in a year. - # of youth that become employed or self-employed in a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoVT, ILO, UNDP, other donors, youth-CSOs/groups, local councils.
14- Talented Youth Fund: Supporting creative youth in all applicable sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 fund established. - # of talented youth supported per year. - # of innovative work created and promoted through the fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoYS, local councils, SFD, donors, youth CSOs/groups.

Table 6 Youth proposed initiatives for enhancing youth education

Education		
Proposed Initiative	Estimated results	Potential partners
15- UNSCR 2250 Educational promotion initiative: Promoting UNSCR 2250 within formal education on all levels: schools, technical institutes, and universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of agreements signed with relevant ministries and universities. - # of formal curriculums integrating UNSCR 2250. - # of schools, institutes/universities integrating UNSCR 2250 in the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), MoVT, donors/ INGOs, and youth CSOs/groups.
16- No child left behind initiative: The initiative aims at supporting vulnerable children in joining schools, and bringing children back to school that have dropped out due to the conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of kids newly joining school. - # of children that have dropped out of schools re-joining. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoE, local councils, donors, youth CSOs/groups
17- Rural girls' education fund: Establishing or reactivating the girls' education fund with the aim of supporting school and higher education for rural girls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of rural girls joining/re-joining school. - # of rural girls joining university. - # of rural girls attending literacy classes. - # of rural girls enrolled in vocational training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoE, MoHE, MoVT, SFD, local councils, Yemen Women Union, UN agencies, donors/INGOs, - Youth CSOs/groups.

Table 7 Youth proposed initiatives for inclusion, legal & environmental issues

Proposed Initiative	Estimated results	Potential partners
Inclusion		
<p>18- My vulnerability will not stop me Supporting and engaging vulnerable youth such as marginalized, less educated, or disabled youth to play an active role in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of vulnerable youth involved in community decision-making topics. - # of community groups/committees having at least one vulnerable youth in a leadership position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizations supporting marginalized and handicapped individuals, donors, local councils.
<p>19- Forming hope initiative Aiming at reintegrating youth ex-prisoners and ex-fighters into the community again and building their capacities to be active producers and peacemakers, through creating opportunities and policies in the fields of education, employment, and promoting a culture of peace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of targeted youth rehabilitated and qualified. - # of related policies issued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government, judiciary council, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), Ministry of Defence (MoD), donors, youth groups.
A- Legal:		
<p>20- The legal clinic for youth Establishing a dedicated website for providing legal advice to youth regarding all issues of their concern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of youth getting legal help in a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government, judiciary council, lawyer syndicate, donors/INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.
B- Environmental		
<p>21- Tree planting initiative Preserving the environment. Forming youth groups on the local level to promote and support planting new trees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of youth groups formed for this purpose. - # of trees planted a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI), local council, donors/INGOs, youth CSOs/groups.

CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION MEETINGS (CMs) ON YPS

5.1. Participation

a) Associated Problems/Challenges

Throughout the 7 CMs, youth expressed the need for comprehensive youth inclusion in decision-making processes as well as for youth and youth-led CSO representation in peacebuilding. The main challenges to their active participation in national affairs and the peace process that youth explored were:

Peace dialogue restrictions: According to youth, Yemeni peace consultations have been, and still are, restricted to political and conflict parties with no opportunities given to independent youth. Youth feel that there is no hope for them to participate in peace processes with the domination of political parties and ignorance from international actors. Every time they call for their right to participate in peace activities, independent youth usually get accused by for being affiliated with one political or conflict party or another.

Economic restrictions: They also referred to poverty and unemployment that led many youths to prioritize job-searching, working, and increasing income over training, educational opportunities, and/or being involved in peace activities. This, in turn, makes youth vulnerable to recruitment by armed actors in Yemen, who take advantage of their search for financial stability and job advancement.

Mistrust: Youth referred also to their perceptions of the mistrust between youth on the one hand and political parties, authorities, and NGOs on the other as principal challenges to participation. Youth feel that politicians are not perceived as trustworthy.

Lack of education: one of the main issues raised by youth is the lack of suitable education to play an active role in decision-making and/or peace-making processes. This created a gap in youth's awareness of social dynamics in their community and of the peacebuilding process. They are insufficiently aware of local and national political and cultural dynamics

and uninformed of their own rights and duties. All the above further led to a lack of confidence among youths themselves concerning their ability to participate effectively.

Lack of encouragement: They recognized the discouragement towards youth initiatives in the political arena, the harm of repressive policies towards youth, and the imposition of ideas on youth. They reflected on the extent of full participation by the youth in the National Dialogue Conference in 2014 and their limited participation in it or in implementing its outcomes as an example.

Gap between youth and UN missions: Youth are also worried about the lack of direct channels of communication between them and UN missions, they felt that their voices were not heard, even during the limited interactions that did happen. This gap also created confusion for youth regarding the work and goals of the missions, as well as the relationships between UN agencies.

Lack of youth support: Unfortunately, there is currently a lack of sufficient resources and instruments, such as logistical and financial support, to increase youth participation in national dialogues, with a lack of space for youth's ideas, and of initiatives to harness youth efforts to realize peace.

Absence of women's voices: Youth also highlighted the lack of women's representation in peace dialogues that reflects the failure of women's inclusion in peacebuilding and peace-making, as women's empowerment is weakened by the absence of their voices, making it a necessity to advocate for women's inclusion within government institutions and for gender-specific psychological support programs as well as gender sensitivity/inclusion within the education system in order for meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding.

Laws shortages: the weak enforcement of laws and political practices related to women's rights, sexual harassment, and the inequality in political representation between men and women is a real barrier to women's participation.

Further barriers for young women: Young women face further barriers to their participation in Yemeni society and to their access to opportunities for political representation. Participants highlighted that the most serious challenges concern injustice and inequality

embedded in societal customs and traditions such as early marriage, lack of opportunities to begin or continue political engagement, gender stereotyping, and the marginalization of women in society. Furthermore, women's opinions and ideas are neither recognized nor considered in society due to prejudiced beliefs that women lack the competence to make meaningful contributions in public affairs. Finally, the lack of women's representation in peace dialogues reflects on the failure of women's inclusion in peacebuilding and peace-making, as women's empowerment is weakened by the absence of their voices in those spaces.

b) Proposed youth solutions and relevant actors

- Group discussions yielded significant insights regarding youth, which centred on three themes: training, increasing opportunities for youth-representation locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally; and helping and empowering young men and women to acquire and practice dialogue skills.
- Youth call with absolute confidence for actualizing UNSCR 2250 in the light of the National Dialogue's outputs related to the youth, appealing to Security Council missions to take youth-related issues into account.
- They expressed the desire to see youth communities form a youth consultative bloc that demands their involvement in peace-making processes and to be consulted upon during the peace process; suggesting that the creation of this entity should be at the top of the UN OSESGY's agenda. This entity should strive to explore youth participation opportunities in peace agreements and provide a direct channel of communication between the UN OSESGY and the Yemeni youth.
- In creating this entity, there would be a need to coordinate closely with local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure support for youth involvement and leadership. Another key need in the creation of a youth consultation bloc would be significant explanation and clarification of what exactly the UN OSESGY is, meaning its purpose, mandate, structure, protocols, and positions with other UN agencies or bodies. This comes as a result of significant confusion over what exactly UN OSESGY

does and requires seminars, awareness programs, courses, and training through CSOs and youth initiatives. Participants clarified that there should be involvement for youth in remote and difficult to reach areas as well and suggested that various means of creative media can be used to pursue such a goal.

- Holding workshops in youth communities like schools and universities about the Resolution, the conditions of its implementation, and its goals. Additionally, encouraging youth involvement in peace initiatives and agreements requires activating the role of CSOs, who already have important experience and networks in the Yemeni peacebuilding fora. It also requires providing sufficient awareness to local authorities, government, and other stakeholders about the importance of youth initiatives and participation in peace agreements, to maximize the enabling environment.
- There is a need to review the curriculum to ensure the dissemination of the concepts of equality and women's empowerment, combat illiteracy – notably by the establishment of literacy centres - and educate society on the important role played by women's information and awareness programs. The educational system should be reformed to clearly promote a culture of freedom and women's rights, and the fields of visual and performing art and literature should be leveraged to advocate for women's rights and inclusion.
- Working collaboratively to build an integrated program that inspires youth to engage in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and trains them in dialogue and communication skills. These competencies would enable their engagement in events and activities that would increase the opportunities for youth representation in forums, international negotiations, and, eventually, in the implementation of the ND's outcomes.
- In order to empower women in the face of these challenges, it is necessary to strengthen the role of women in society and educate women on their rights and the duties associated with those rights. To achieve this end, awareness-raising platforms

should be created for women to advocate for their rights and for men to support women in this effort. In addition, women's voices should be elevated in the media, and women should be supported through media institutions.

- There is a need for the UN OSESGY to form a productive and an impartial women-only team for the purpose of enabling women to participate, shedding light on those women who have broken free of stereotypes and presenting their stories and achievements to the community.
- Since there are societal and normative constraints on the influence of youth's opinions and ideas, efforts should be made to enhance youth's self-confidence and capacity to effectively design and present their ideas. This could be done through seminars that would allow youth to elevate and discuss their ideas, as well as gain self-confidence and presentation skills.
- It is necessary to highlight the existing role of women in the political, cultural, and community spheres in which they participate. In addition, there should be efforts to advocate for their further involvement in these spheres generally and specifically through national dialogue seminars that communicate women's ideas and highlight their capabilities and achievements.
- Establish youth local councils in each governorate to work with the local councils on issues related to youth and development in their communities.
- Forming a supreme youth council that suppose to advocate youth agenda at the national level and to have a space to participate in policymaking.
- The OSESGY shall put some pressure on the conflict parties to engaged youth in the ongoing national dialogues.
- Revitalizing the students' unions, which play an important role in safeguarding of students' rights (youth) and advocating their issues. Moreover, it is necessary to be supported and encouraged by Ministry of Higher Education.

- A national strategy should be prepared toward enhancing the role of youth in public life.
- Consultative meetings with decision-makers calling for the implementation of the youth-related outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

In conclusion, participation can be succinctly described as the corner stone of UNSCR 2250, if this pillar is achieved, the other pillars can more easily be achieved. Youth suggested involving the parties to conflict and security forces in focus group discussions with youth in order to aid maintaining safety and order. There was also time given to discussing awareness, meaning both youth's awareness of their rights and the community's awareness of youth's rights. Youth strongly would like to fight for their rights and would be aided in this by stronger trust among the community and stronger self-belief. There are many challenges related to different fields of life and unless the stakeholders can help in mitigating them, youth can never participate and be involved in decision-making or peacebuilding due to culture-related issues. So, UN agencies, in addition to the decision-makers, should also take practical actions to involve youth.

5.2. Protection

This clause emphasizes the importance of protecting the human rights of civilians, including youth, in active conflict zones and of bringing an end to impunity. Much of this clause refers to youth to the extent that they are civilians subject to wartime harm. This consultation produced key programmatic propositions in the field of protection that were consistently cited amongst participants.

a) Associated Problems/Challenges

Poor financial situation: Some fractions of the Younger generation might find themselves forced to engage in conflict because of their poor financial situation, lack of employment, and lack of education, which makes it easy for the conflicting parties to bring them into their armed conflict.

Absence of monitoring human rights: The total lack of monitoring HRs violations and GBV issues, including lack of reporting is a big challenge due to mistrust, difficulty in verifying, and

fear of stigma and defamation among survivors. Since the beginning of the war, the fund has been focused on relief work; this has led to less attention to human rights monitoring activities.

Local economy: The destruction of infrastructure and the local economy further complicates the problem. Lacking an income makes civilian youth in general, and women in particular, get exposed to different types of harassment and abuse.

Drugs & weapons: The proliferation of drugs and abuse in conflict zones, in addition to the proliferation of weapons among young people in Yemen, is a particular challenge to protection approaches and a dangerous precursor to increased violence.

Targeting schools: The targeting of schools and the military takeover of educational institutions by the different armed parties led to the closure of schools and the inability to pursue the educational process, which by turn increased the risk of violence and recruiting young boys in the conflict.

Violation of international humanitarian laws: What complicates the problem more is the lack of adherence with international humanitarian laws by armed groups, resulting in recruiting and exploiting children, human rights abuse, exposing civilians to risk, and attacking freedoms.

Lack of suitable psychosocial support: A lot of unaddressed trauma and other psychosocial distress as a result of the war affect youth's wellbeing and ability to fully take part.

Gender discrimination: Young women face gender discrimination, forced marriage, early marriage, domestic violence, exclusion from political participation, decision-making, and challenges in gender equality and women's empowerment, including financial dependency, lack of appreciation of women's abilities and competencies and restrictions on their freedom. Furthermore, the focus on economic opportunities for young people often does not include women's economic empowerment especially women with disabilities, who face a double handicap of gender and disability.

b) Proposed youth solutions and relevant actors

- Youth protection requires a variety of interventions, including the strict application of human rights laws and accountability, reducing intolerance among conflicting parties, creating peace consultations, and providing employment opportunities for young people.
- To provide the local authorities and law enforcement agencies with training and awareness sessions on youth protection in light of the international laws and UNSC Resolutions.
- Establishing Community Security Committees (CSCs) with the objective of organizing events, highlighting human rights issues and the importance of women's empowerment and what they face in terms of gender-based violence, early marriage, and restriction of their right to education. These committees should coordinate with state institutions, international organizations, and the private sector to provide youth employment and achieve financial stability for young women. In addition, these committees should organize awareness campaigns on the dangers of armed groups and the means by which armed groups attempt to attract young fighters. This also requires involving preachers, school staff, and local authorities to attract young people from armed groups and drug trafficking.
- Monitoring and reporting HRs violations and GBV requires the establishment of confidential reporting channels to ensure the safety of victims finding safe and friendly spaces for women in society.
- Calling for regulating weapon carrying alongside awareness campaigns on the risks associated with carrying and using weapons.
- Local organizations should organize educational workshops on how best to integrate IDPs into their host communities.
- With regard to international humanitarian law, participants expressed the need for UN agencies to take all necessary precautions to protect non-combatants from ongoing

armed conflict by moving them to safe areas, or making the densely populated cities away from the conflict by moving military camps and barracks outside the cities.

- At the international level, participants proposed restrictions or sanctions on parties that exploit youth in conflicts. The international community can put in place measures of protection and put pressure on conflicting political parties to apply them on the ground. After that, OSESGY could support the establishment of a centre for all youth protection committees throughout Yemen.
- To resume the educational process, armed groups should evacuate schools and provide psychosocial support to help young children overcome the emotional trauma of war.
- Activating the role of international organizations and government agencies in Yemen and linking them in parallel with domestic training and reintegration programs to enhance job creation opportunities.
- Allowing women to participate in dialogue and decision-making processes is essential to protect young women in conflict.
- Enacting laws that enable women to enter unconventional jobs, often reserved for men, and these efforts can be supported through media campaigns, networking opportunities, and support for institutions that focus on women's rights.
- Support young women to become lawyers, judges, and legislators through facilitating registration, providing financial support, and establishing quota systems to ensure more women inclusion in the judiciary system.
- Amending the existing discriminatory laws including drafting a personal status law that further protects women's rights and the establishment of family courts in Yemen.
- Obligating the law enforcement agencies to promptly investigate and prosecute any crimes or cases of violence against youth, with uncovering the perpetrators and holding them publicly accountable.
- Establishing psychological, social and legal rehabilitation centres for youth through the competent authorities in partnership with CSOs to raise awareness and empower young

men and women to ensure their active participation in achieving sustainable development.

- Implementing advocacy activities and campaigns by CSOs, youth initiatives and youth alliances to call for youth's protection.
- Establish a national network of the main actors to disseminate the principles of protection and ensuring their participation.
- To hold media programs on conflict resolution skills and the importance of coexistence and community peace. And put more control on media to be sensitive to conflict.
- Implement projects aiming at enhancing youth debate skills and implementing debates on issues related to community peace, coexistence and youth role.
- Developing a national strategy for youth's protection.

To conclude, protection as well as other pillars is closely related to participation in most of the challenges and solutions. Granting youth the power of participation in decision-making and guaranteeing their representation in the key governmental authorities will facilitate protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement as well.

5.3. Prevention

Youth have a significant role to play in the prevention of violence in their communities. This pillar emphasizes the importance of institutional support in this area. Bringing together youth from diverse backgrounds and communities can promote social cohesion and stave off violent outcomes. The Resolution calls for policies reflecting acknowledgement of the importance of youth in peace processes, both in terms of education and civil society.

a) Associated Problems/Challenges

Based on the five consultation meetings, participants have shared relatively common challenges and issues, including:

Marginalizing the other: Youth agreed that intolerance of diverse opinions and the marginalization of youth ideas are key drivers of societal discord and detractors from achieving a culture of open dialogue.

Negative role models: Specific to some young men is the development of violent tendencies early on through encouragement of negative models of behaviour (e.g. resorting to violence, dominance) that can often lead to early recruitment of children and teenagers.

Youth exclusion: There is an additional need to counter voices of exclusion, violence, and doctrinal or ideological extremism that require specific and creative interventions. Young men specifically are excluded from decision-making through the monopolizing of power through specific political parties and affiliation to certain military leaders. These undemocratic trends re-enforce exclusion and encourage traditional power holders to employ top-down and non-participatory decision-making processes, thus excluding young people from such processes.

Damaging habits and behaviours within families:

Dropping out of schools: Another challenge mentioned by participants is that many young people in Yemen are dropping out of schools, a possible indicator of their inclination to join armed groups. Young women participants raised the issue of illiteracy and lack of education among girls as a key barrier to violence prevention.

Gendered Norms: Regarding young women, women's relegation to 'household work' is furthered by a lack of employment opportunities outside of the home and social norms preventing access to possible opportunities. Due to the burdens and constraints placed upon women, women are reaching a state of fatigue and exhaustion. Young women face challenges in implementing their projects, which are sometimes seen as lacking legitimacy by community members who do not recognize young women's competencies and restrict their ability to complete projects by imposing curfews and travel restrictions.

Early marriage: Many participants also raised the issue of early child marriage, and the stigma associated with sexual violence, marital violence, and other forms of violence against women.

Lack of economic opportunities: Due to the unstable security and economic conditions, the local market has no enough economic opportunities for youth to maintain stable income so that they can be protected from being involved by militants. These harsh economic

conditions push some families to send their young men to join fighting battles for the purpose of payments.

Media war: Beside the military war there is another media war where the conflict parties use to influence the public opinion in their favors and interests. This includes the use of hatred and incitement speech which is of negative impact on the social cohesion. Among these extensive media war activities, youth have no enough space to recognize peace and to work for it.

b) Proposed youth solutions and relevant actors

- Empowering young people to lead on violence prevention actions in their communities would be of a particular effect, as would the development of a policy for organizations to include a quota for young Yemenis to participate in peacebuilding initiatives.
- The government, represented by the MoPIC and the MoE, as well as INGOs and NGOs, should take responsibility for building peace and preventing violence and conflicts via awareness-raising campaigns and activities that involve young people to promote UNSCR 2250 in the local community and across Yemen. **In this regard, youth houses and sport and social clubs shall be activated.**
- These barriers can be overcome through educational seminars focused on inclusive dialogue and problem solving, as well as through the creation of awareness brochures that highlight the problems and negative effects of marginalizing youth's views.
- Creating jobs, normalizing nonviolent conflict resolution, and training individuals to be peacebuilding professionals were all suggested by participants. Providing job opportunities and vocational training for young people to meet the current output of universities enables young people to contribute constructively in society.
- Participants called for raising awareness within families, schools, and communities of damaging habits and behaviours, providing positive role models who reject violence, and interventions by human rights organizations alongside the activation of laws through the judiciary. Additionally, awareness raising on the importance of girl's

education, the need for women's education centres, and advocacy campaigns to support women's voices.

- Young women proposed the enactment of a law on marriage that would protect women from marital violence and prohibit child marriage, as well as increased education, awareness, and participation of women in society.
- Women are also actively able to engage in violence prevention by addressing violence in the home. Mothers of ex-combatants and youth involved in terrorist acts need to be provided with courses, workshops, and general support to reintegrate their children into communities. Parents, and particularly mothers, can be effective leaders in violence prevention by creating special incubators and support programs for youth and other parents to help deal with psychological problems.
- Youth also called for UN agencies and other donors to support their initiatives for promoting and advocating UNSCR 2250, which will enhance prevention as well. In this regard, they recommended designing messages and flashes on youth rights and youth protection. Social media can be an effective medium to conduct this successfully.
- Integrating the concepts of peace culture, tolerance, coexistence, etc. into the educational curricula of schools and universities.
- Establishing youth training/empowerment centres at the district and governorate levels to be safe places for raising youth's legal awareness on their rights within the local and international laws and agreements.
- For the protection pillar, participants proposed forming a legal CSOs collation to protect youth.
- Implementing intensive advocacy activities on releasing the young civilian detainees.
- Establish a national youth fund for support and fund the youth innovating projects.
- Youth called for implementing the National Dialogue's outcomes related to youth's empowerment and participation in public affairs.

Generally, participants considered education and economic opportunity as the key entry points to achieving prevention.

5.4. Partnerships

The partnership clause of the Resolution encourages all actors invested in successful peace processes to seek multilateral partnerships with organizations and institutions at the international, national, and local levels. This clause puts emphasis on the Peace Commission as the major actor in this collaborative process and on the importance of combating extremist discourse multilaterally.

a) Associated Problems/Challenges

Lack of partnerships within the community: The lack of real partnership between youth and their communities, which leaves youth vulnerable to extremist groups in terms of recruitment and violations especially for children and teenagers.

Economic challenges: Tackling unemployment and the absence of partnerships between youth and the private sector are key issues raised by young men in Yemen. These shortages add to the difficulties that youth face to succeed.

Lack of communication with UN missions: The lack of direct communication with the UN missions and the International Peace Committee leads to a neglecting of the role of youth and consequently a lack of partnerships on peace issues. The presence of communication channels with the youth can enhance the process of voicing their participation in the political process.

Internet access and travel constraints: The lack of internet access and the restrictions placed on internet usage. The frequent power cuts, the increase in fees, the limits on downloading online content, and restrictions on certain websites make it difficult for youth to stay updated with the changing situation and current opportunities, and so their ability for partnership is limited. Furthermore, more restrictions on internal and international travel cause youth to miss many opportunities inside and outside the country.

Absence of youth representation: The absence of a youth presence in regional as well as international conferences and the UN missions and OSESGY meetings leads the key potential

partners for youth to neglect partnerships. Even if youth are represented they are represented in very limited spaces and normally representing their parties, which leaves independent youth voiceless.

Less youth qualification: Weak education makes youth unable to get involved effectively in their proposed roles for peace-making and community development. Furthermore, this weak education makes youth less qualified to participate positively in establishing and maintaining long-term partnerships.

Low attraction to peacebuilding: Participants shared the opinion that the majority of young men in Yemen are not attracted to peacebuilding as a field of study or work. They see no future for this field in the labour market, and so it seen as a waste of time.

Weak government security forces: In addition, the inability of government security forces to partner with local communities and organizations in order to curtail youth recruitment into violent extremist groups, drug use, or adherence to extremist religious beliefs is a key hurdle to peacebuilding efforts.

Extremist rhetoric: Violent extremist rhetoric, limited religious awareness, and brainwashing of young people serves as a powerful draw for youth to join armed groups.

Lack of social cohesion: The continuing conflict between the parties, the worsening security, political, and economic situation, compounded by the absence of existing political and social forces to increase social cohesion, has exacerbated the negative effects of the conflict.

Lack of donor awareness: They refer to some challenges such as donors not knowing enough about the situation in Yemen, an absence of social accountability, and political quarrels that result in the consolidation of power within political parties and the marginalization of local CSOs.

Youth-led CSOs lack competencies: Many youth-led CSOs lack the competencies to establish proper partnership coordination.

Women's exclusion: Young women in the consultative meeting raised the lack of suitable jobs as a key barrier to participation and partnership development. Moreover, the exclusion

of women in peacebuilding and the absence of young women representatives in the International Peace Committee requires reflections by the UN missions, in addition to the inequality between women and men in employment opportunities.

Violent Extremism: When men join extremist armed groups, women's vulnerability to harassment and poverty increases. This coincides with the community's neglect of women's role in countering violent extremism, which if realized, can contribute to raising the family's awareness around violent extremism. However, trainings and awareness activities are needed to empower women around these issues and their role.

Gender Norms: Women lack access to empowerment, equality, social mobility, education, and inclusion in political decision-making, which makes involving women in partnership practices a challenge. Women's participation in setting up partnerships is negatively influenced by the social norms that restrict women to access to public participation including marginalization by tribal leaders, religious clergy, and political parties.

b) Proposed youth solutions and relevant actors

- Participating youth believe that a key step towards increased partnership with youth is the creation of a youth council that would contribute to decision-making and enhance employment opportunities.
- Another important step would be the inclusion of a clause within the constitution that recognizes youth as key contributors to society and law-making processes. Increasing support for young people across different sectors would enable diverse youth to activate positive agency, engaging with governance actors, CSOs, and other forms of productive social contributions.
- Participants also voiced the importance of involving local communities and non-governmental actors by the different international actors in Yemen through developing strategies to combat violent extremist rhetoric, resulting from violent interpretations of religious teachings. Participants noted the importance of awareness raising campaigns in communities to counteract the pull of violent extremist groups, especially for children

and teenagers, who are often the focus of recruitment campaigns. Moreover, partnerships between youth, clerics, Imams, community leaders, the private sector, and relevant government ministries would enable the creation of comprehensive interventions that tackle the complexities of violent rhetoric in Yemen.

- Providing development projects can be the role of a proposed Vital Peacebuilding Commission, which would focus on sectarian conflict, revenge, and poor awareness through the dissemination of the principles of moderation, referral to the judiciary and court system, and the provision of education through courses and workshops aimed at the state and security sector.
- The development of partnerships between the private sector, small and medium-sized businesses, CSOs, and international donors would be a first step in enabling diverse job creation despite the national conflict.
- Provision of diverse employment opportunities, including in the field of peacebuilding, would enhance youth ability to contribute to alliance-building and partnership creation for peace.
- Young **men and women** also raised the need for greater social cohesion and family cohesion in order to activate support networks during conflict and resulting trauma.
- In general, there is also a need to increase support for young women through social care, psychological services, and awareness raising campaigns on women's empowerment and contributions to society. Besides, activation of partnerships and alliances in order to enable women's access to the public sphere. In addition, the minimal presence of women in the workforce necessitates employment creation for women, awareness raising, and further education for women.
- Supporting the needs of young people includes the necessity to overcome the lack of funding, training, and awareness on peacebuilding, which can largely be developed through the creation of partnerships with the private sector, local authorities, NGOs, and others.

- Coordination between youth and the UN Committee on Peace, as well as the creation of a hotline for local Peace Committees and the International Peace Committee.
- Strengthening the role of young people in decision-making at the local and regional levels means their inclusion in regional and international conferences, and participation in UN and OSESGY meetings.
- Establishing professional courses for young people, expanding the fields of university specialties, and expanding university buildings to accommodate more students. Establishing a federation of local committees that include youth participants in order to create partnerships around countering violence and violent extremism would enable joint work on core conflict issues. In addition, the creation of employment opportunities for young people, educating young people about extremist groups, and establishing rehabilitation and professional training programs for young people would enable the type of partnerships that contribute to violence reduction.
- Strategies that counter violent extremism must address the local and external parties who advance extremist rhetoric for their own ends. These strategies must be broad enough to be applied by a variety of stakeholders, including political, religious, and social actors. Therefore, the most appropriate approach is through media and social media campaigns that can channel political messaging through a unified discourse that is amplified by local religious and political actors, as well as international actors such as the UN OSESGY.
- Efforts must be made to create employment opportunities for youth, ensure that the application process for these opportunities is fair and lacking in favouritism, and will adequately alleviate youth poverty. Youth-specific projects such as cash-for-work programs and job trainings provide pathways for youth to achieve financial sustainability will help meet their needs.
- To strategically counter violent extremist rhetoric, communities must act to provide counter-messaging and coordinate efforts to prevent youth from joining violent extremist groups by providing alternative pathways and educational opportunities to

inform youth on the dangers of joining these groups and the harm they inflict upon youth's communities.

- There is a need for social programs that raise the importance of women's role in society and develop educational opportunities for women to advance their professional status and capacity to advocate for the value of their inclusion in public roles. Already, the outcomes from the national dialogue call for women's fair participation in political life and the development of women's empowerment projects to ensure that political and religious leaders recognize the value of women's participation in society. In addition, young women's networks should receive stronger support.
- To strengthen partnership on the local level, stronger efforts need to be made to build bridges of trust between youth and non-youth actors, including through recognition of the importance of youth roles.
- Participants suggested that donors should network more frequently with youth to keep up to date on youth's needs and to provide youth with information about current projects and donors. Finally, Youth-led CSOs need to be competent in seeking and setting up partnership opportunities.
- Considering the considerable breadth and depth of these constraints to women's empowerment, there needs to be an equally deep and broad movement to counter these forces. This could include the amplification of women's voices in the media and journalism, efforts to promote women's empowerment through entrepreneurship, the creation and funding of centres that provide vocational training and workshops in crafts (i.e. sewing, embroidery, and handicrafts), and the promotion of young women's secondary and university education.
- Encouraging young girls and women to complete their higher education and enter professions that can render them financially independent is a key in addressing violence in Yemen.
- Allocate fund and resources of the fund for children and youth projects by supporting youth-lead CSOs, initiatives and youth coalitions working on the ground on youth

awareness, qualification and empowerment to enable them participate effectively in public life management and decision-making.

- Implementing the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) outcomes concerned with reforming the legislations related to youth to ensure their participation in political, economic and social life and support their access to decision-making position.
- Carry out national and local surveys through the competent authorities and in partnership with CSOs to find out the needs and interest of young people and how to link them to donor institutions and funds for small and medium enterprises to contribute to youth economic empowerment.
- Develop a national policy youth empowerment and political participation.
- Separating "Youth" from "The Ministry of Youth and Sports" and establish the Youth Supreme Council.
- Establishing a National Fund for supporting and promoting innovative youth projects.
- Holding consultative meetings and debates between youth and decision makers.
- Providing training and awareness for the public institutions on involving youth in public affairs to create enabling environment for youth.
- Activating mosques' role through the Ministry of Endowments to outreach the cultures of tolerance and coexistence and reject extremism and violence.
- Positively use media to promote tolerance and coexistence and reject extremism and violence through various Media means and channels.
- Integrating the concepts of peace, tolerance and community coexistence into educational curricula.
- Capacity building and awareness raising for the state institutions on the importance of youth's participation in public life. This could help in setting an enabling environment for youth.

To conclude, youth's limited partnership activities with external actors, like donors, INGOs, and UN agencies, implies that partnership coordination on the local level is weak and requires some orientation to CSOs.

5.5. Reintegration and disengagement

This clause of the Resolution emphasizes the particular position of youth in the disarmament and reintegration process. As youth return to their communities following periods of conflict, it is key that the government ensures comprehensive access to employment and job training to young returnees. Promoting social stability and stoking economic growth during periods of reconstruction are essential to transitioning smoothly to peace.

a) Associated Problems/Challenges

Disarmament: Disarmament is one key issue related to youth and disengagement. This could include the seizure of all weapons possessed by civilians not registered in the military.

Ignorance of humanitarian laws: The non-compliance of armed groups to international humanitarian law remains a principal issue.

Difficulty of reintegration: Current issues with demobilization are due to difficulties in reintegrating fighters, escaping conflict zones, and difficulties in finding a stable residence and fixed income, alongside rejection by community members upon the return of fighters. Young men most often face issues in demobilization such as a lack of job opportunities, a lack of awareness, and a culture of violence due to poor education. In addition to this, particularly in Sana'a and Dhamar, it is difficult to reach those who are back from participating in battles, i.e. as visiting them is not allowed.

Young men burdens: The barriers to conducting effective business, the difficulties in continuing further education unless financially affluent, and the difficulties in travelling to other countries in order to pursue opportunities are all barriers young men face.

Young women burdens: participants referred to the role of women in the public sphere as a significant barrier to demobilization.

More women barriers: Moreover, women's inability to travel safely in-country prevents young women from continuing to work and pursue education abroad.

Security Challenges: There is a significant difficulty in encouraging women to work given the security challenges and potential backlash in some communities. Participants expressed a significant need to provide safe passage to ensure the continuity of women's work.

b) Proposed youth solutions and relevant actors

- Participants proposed the intervention of neutral forces on the ground to ensure the implementation of disarmament.
- Awareness-raising and education campaigns to counter the normalization of carrying weapons was also raised as key, alongside the holding of a special session in parliament to establish conditions and laws to prevent the carrying of arms, followed by its application by state actors and CSOs.
- Participants noted a significant need for the transfer of individuals affected by conflict and the provision of safe housing complexes, and the contribution of host communities in providing employment opportunities for IDPs and refugees.
- There is also a need for job creation in the private sector and the government, the establishment of a support fund for youth-led and focused projects, and the activation of the role of vocational institutes and their involvement with the private sector. And activating the roles of small and medium sized enterprises financing institutions and facilitate their procedures to ensure increase in the young beneficiaries from grants and soft loans to establish their own projects.
- In addition, specific interventions that curtail young men's engagement in armed groups (using entry points derived from research on the topic and highly contextualized interventions) would further demobilization in Yemen. National decisions should be taken that prevent and discourage young people from joining armed groups, which could

include the formation of a committee to address the issue and to commission studies to glean further information on contributing factors.

- Enabling young entrepreneurs and project staff to travel, access education, and further job prospects would require government and international interventions to acquire necessary permits, travel documents, visas, and further significant efforts to lift the blockade that affects so many young professionals.
- Education awareness and joint activities involving young men and women would enable young women to be increasingly visible in calling for demobilization. Peer-to-peer coordination was suggested as an effective manner of encouraging demobilization and reintegration into society, with young people equipped both to support reintegration and accept reintegration back to non-violent society.
- Coordination with international and human rights organizations would enable the opening of avenues and opportunities for young women and nurture their active role and voice in society, in particular in calls for disarmament and demobilization. Obliging employers to enforce stringent security measures to help women to work safely and to address the security authorities to facilitate and manage women's ability to work in all sectors. One significant suggestion was a consultative meeting between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and the MoL to discuss measures that help women to work safely in all respects.
- Conducting field surveys to prepare studies and working papers to identify the reasons behind youth involvement in armed conflict, and to develop appropriate strategies to rehabilitate youth and reintegrate them again in the society.
- Design and implement youth psychological rehabilitation programs to ensure their active participation in the society.
- Better recognition and support for youth's innovations.
- Establishing youth summer camps to motivate young men and women to innovate and get their ideas supported. This will not only help youth's projects and innovations, but

also it will get them a way of violence, extremism, and terrorism and promote the principles of tolerance and peace.

- Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration activities should include the needs of young people affected by the armed conflict, including economic opportunities, gender-sensitivity and youth employment policies.
- Building the capacities and skills of youth through educational programs designed to promote the culture of peace.
- Supporting youth leaders-based organizations, especially those working on peacebuilding, as partners in youth employment programs.

In general, youth considered securing job opportunities for youth as the key to achieving this pillar. They also referred to the need for acceptance and coexistence, achievable through a change in the current political climate that is characterized by hatred and extremism.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Based on the topics and issues discussed above, and inspired mainly from the potential beneficiaries themselves (i.e. Youth), all actors, as well as concerned organizations and people, including the UN OSESGY are recommended to:

- Use all possible means, and direct all available resources and efforts, into ending the current conflict, including problems related to the conflict, such as internal/external travel restrictions, and re-establishing the governmental system as soon as possible.
- Push all fighting parties and decision makers to include youth of both sexes within their peace dialogue delegations.
- Promote obligatory policies and criteria for including an acceptable gender balance for independent youth representatives within the peace dialogues and re-attaining the governmental systems and services. This is provided that strict and thorough processes are put in place to identify genuinely independent youth to avoid the repetition of previous mistakes in this regard.

- Promote more gender balanced leadership positions for younger youth within youth-led CSOs. Setting up criteria for forming partnerships, such as a requirement for CSOs to maintain a ratio of at least 50% women to men for younger youth within its leadership positions.
- Promote and encourage international initiatives for youth, especially those UN initiatives mentioned above, to establish active and easily accessible offices in Yemen.
- Reactivate Yemeni national initiatives for youth and promote total political independence for those initiatives to allow them to work with youth free from the conflict parties' intervention.
- Consider the huge lists of youth recommended initiatives and suggestions that were generated from the CMR and CMs regarding all aspects of youth needs and interests and carry out further analysis, prioritizing, and refining of those initiatives. The starting point should be the list of initiatives presented in the [Youth Suggested Initiatives](#) section, under the [Initiatives for Youth: Chapter 4](#) above.
- Youth perceptions, needs and interests, and specific barriers in the areas under *Ansar Allah* rule should be explored to recognize the specific needs of youth in those areas, especially that those areas form the majority of populations in the country. At a minimum, this could be done through online surveys.
- UN missions in Yemen are particularly recommended to open direct communication with independent youth of different backgrounds to guarantee their participation in the peace process. Forming groups dedicated to young men and young women can enhance this communication and place youth needs at the top of the agenda.
- As summarized from the findings of both the CMR and youth CMs, economic empowerment and supporting education are the key entry points for enabling youth to play their prospective roles in the current peace-making process and the coming country development agenda. Therefore, UN agencies and donors should take this deeply into consideration when planning and implementing interventions.

- Considering the last recommendation, paying salaries or giving compensation for peace work, and funding youth-led peace work, might encourage more youth participation in peace activities.
- Consider adjusting the schedules of peace interventions, so working/studying youth can have opportunities to participate.
- Promoting, empowering, supporting, and protecting youth funded groups seems to be one of the most effective and most efficient points of entry to increase youth involvement in operationalizing UNSCR 2250 and to enhance community harmony. Thus this should be taken as a priority for programming interventions and support.
- Supporting youth to establish a national youth network by establishing a specialized dedicated group for each of the UNSCR 2250 five pillars, at the local community level. Then creating a governorate level groups, and then a national specialized networks with clear policies and procedures to enhance a bottom up approach.
- Following the last recommendation, generating greater trust in informal groups founded by youth, within their communities will maximize the impact of their work.
- Addressing youth themselves with awareness raising campaigns regarding the terrible impact of the war on their own future.
- Expanding donor intervention in the educational sector, including education quality enhancement, improving access to education, and integrating peace themes and UNSCR 2250 pillars within educational curricula.
- Insisting on severe penalties for armed groups that recruit children and younger youth under 18 years old as fighters.
- As about 70% of the country's population lives in rural areas, increasing consultation sessions with, and interventions for, youth in rural areas is a priority in order to fully include rural youth.
- Supporting youth returning from the conflict with jobs and/or study opportunities in order to encourage other youths to return from the war.

- Pressuring the fighting parties to comply with international humanitarian law, which may be aided by using support as a means of negotiation.
- Considering establishing more youth dedicated bodies/entities in Yemen for more youth engagement.
- Looking at the low level of donor work on YPS themes, it is recommended that YPS be integrated into other interventions, such as those in the humanitarian and developmental sectors, to expand work on peace and youth, as this issue is one of the key cross-cutting issues for the Yemeni context.

CONCLUSION

Due to the ongoing conflict, the situation in Yemen is very difficult and specific to its context. The country is split into different armed groups' territories, the conflict has destroyed the economy, and infrastructure, services, security, social cohesion, and all aspects of life have been catastrophically affected. The conflict is set to continue and further worsen all areas of life in the country. However, despite the bleak situation, there is always hope. Youth shape the largest portion of its population. Despite all the hardships that they have been through, Yemeni youth have shown high levels of resiliency and commitment to play an active role in bringing about positive and peaceful change to their society. However, as the war drags on, they will continue to be subject to several threats that hinders their ability to bring about this change. The lack of suitable education, poverty, and exclusion and marginalization by political parties as well as the community, in addition to other challenges, youth are underestimated and limited in their ability to play their proposed role in peace-making and country development. The same challenges can stand as barriers in front of normalizing and

operationalizing UNSCR 2250 in Yemen. During the CMR and the youth CMs in six governorates (Aden, Taiz, Hadhramout, Mareb, Sana'a and Dhamar), youth showed a high level of awareness regarding those challenges and proposed several solutions and initiatives to counter those challenges and barriers. The major focus was on economic empowerment



and capacity building, in addition to security and upholding of human rights and laws.

Young women experience the same general barriers that young men face, yet more specific hindrances, such as cultural and traditional beliefs places restrictions on women's

participation, therefore excluding them from the political and social sphere. Women-specific issues were also highlighted by youth and solutions were proposed as well.

The CMR showed that Yemeni youth are effective at establishing and running youth volunteer groups, and these youth groups can be a key entry point to promoting the desired change. It is highly recommended that youth issues are prioritized, and youth participation in peace-making processes and decision-making are guaranteed to maximize their impact.

*Photo 5 Yemeni children calls for ending war and safe schools (Photo:
<https://theirworld.org/voices/>)*

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