

THE YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT

The Challenge: Youth are Disproportionately Impacted by Conflict

Since 2010, the number of [major armed conflicts has tripled](#). In 2020 alone, [220](#) violent conflicts took place. A recent study [forecasted](#) the pandemic's devastating impacts could plunge 13 more countries into conflict through 2022—a 56% increase compared to pre-COVID-19 estimates. At the same time, 90% of the over 1.8 billion global youth population (ages 16-29) live in developing countries and [1-in-4](#) are affected by [armed conflict and violence](#). Violence, violent conflict, and the global pandemic disproportionately impact youth. Even though they are viewed as mere beneficiaries of aid or perpetrators of violence, youth are actively playing an integral role in building sustainable peace.

The Solution: The Youth, Peace, and Security Act

The bipartisan [Youth, Peace, and Security Act \(YPS Act\)](#) recognizes the vital role youth play in de-escalating conflict from spreading, preventing recurring cycles of violence, improving the effectiveness and sustainability of peace agreements, and strengthening a culture of peace and security. The YPS Act was initially introduced in 2020 by Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), with bipartisan support from Rep. Susan Brooks (R-IN), Rep. Dean Phillips (D-MN), and Rep. John Curtis (R-UT) during the 116th Congress. This bill builds on and complements recent bipartisan prevention-oriented legislation, such as the [Global Fragility Act](#) and the [Women, Peace, and Security Act](#), to ensure youth are part of the U.S. government's integrated solution to reducing violence and conflict and advancing peace and international security.

The Youth, Peace, and Security Act:

- **Mandates an interagency strategy on youth** within a year of enactment that creates a whole-of-government approach to youth programming, funding, and consultation through coordination among the U.S. Department of State, USAID, and Department of Defense and requires the development of agency-specific and regional plans.
- **Creates a Youth Coordinator position at the Deputy Assistant Administrator level at USAID** to coordinate, prioritize, implement, and regularly revise the interagency strategy on conflict prevention, management, and resolution, as well as post-conflict relief and recovery efforts related to youth.
- **Authorizes funds for State Department and USAID** to close the historical gap in funding of youth initiatives through a YPS Fund, which provides grants, emergency aid, and technical assistance to youth and youth-led organizations for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, as well as conflict prevention, management, and resolution initiatives.
- **Establishes an advisory group of YPS experts** to connect youth leaders with U.S. government officials to consult on YPS strategy, development, and program implementation. The composition of the advisory group consists of members of civil society, international organizations, and U.S. government entities, with at least 30% of youth representation.



Why It Matters

Investing in youth peacebuilders is cost-effective.

- According to a [One Young World study](#), every \$1 invested in young people results in a societal return of \$13, valued through initiatives to build peace and create positive change in local communities, such as through a relief project sheltering 26,000 earthquake victims in Nepal to conflict resolution dialogues for 500 participants in Ghana. Yet, many youth-led organizations are volunteer-run, with an estimated half operating on [less than \\$5,000 a year](#). Youth programs to foster peace are crucial for the U.S. and international security and economies, as the cost of global violence is an estimated [\\$14.4 trillion](#) a year. U.S. investment in youth is a cost-effective policy to mitigate conflict-associated expenses, as well as sustainably build peace and promote economic development.

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Youth programming prevents violence.

- Terrorist and violent extremist groups specifically [target young people](#) for recruitment, but engaging and mentoring youth as peacebuilders develops resiliency against recruitment and [reduces violence](#). For instance, from 2011-2017, USAID-funded youth peacebuilding and education programs in Somalia [decreased](#) support for extremist groups and contributed to a near [50% reduction](#) in young Somalis' willingness to support or participate in political violence. Such preventative interventions reduce the need for securitized responses.

Youth build peace.

- Support for youth can help address the drivers of conflict and extremism and create more peaceful communities and countries. The Marib Dam Foundation, a youth-led Yemeni organization, runs internally displaced persons camps and provides basic resources, such as water, sanitation, blankets, solar lamps and emergency shelter materials, to [over 27,000 individuals](#). Access to these basic resources and increased socioeconomic status [reduces the likelihood](#) of youth and other marginalized individuals joining violent extremist groups or participating in conflict out of economic desperation or grievance.



Spotlight: Supporting the YPS agenda and inclusive peace means supporting young women like Sofia Ramyar. She served as Executive Director of [Afghans for Progressive Thinking](#), a prominent

youth-led organization that engaged over 40,000 youth across all 34 Afghan provinces. In a country with [63%](#) of the population below the age of 25, the inclusion of young women leaders is crucial to peace and stability. The YPS Act would help ensure successful implementation of the Global Fragility Act and Women, Peace, and Security Act by investing in the proven impact of young women like Sofia and providing them the resources needed to ensure their work is sustainable.

PASS THE YOUTH, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT TO PARTNER WITH YOUTH TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE PEACE GLOBALLY

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#YES4YPS

U.S. YPS COALITION

U.S. YPS Coalition Members

The [U.S. Youth, Peace and Security Coalition](#) is a collaborative network of youth-led and youth-serving organizations across the peacebuilding, humanitarian, academic, and development fields working to advance the YPS agenda.



**Alliance for
Peacebuilding**
Uniting for Peace

**SEARCH FOR
COMMON GROUND**

- Afghanistan's New Generation Organization
- Afghans for Progressive Thinking
- Ágora México
- Alliance for Middle East Peace
- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- American Friends Service Committee
- Better World Campaign
- Brigada de Voluntarios Bolivarianos del Peru
- Building Blocks for Peace Foundation
- Canadian Coalition for YPS
- CDA Collaborative Learning
- Center for Civil Society and Democracy
- Center for Nonviolent Solutions
- Center for Peace Advocacy and Sustainable Development Africa
- Center for Policy Analysis for Horn of Africa
- Chemonics International
- Civilian Peace Service Canada
- Colors of Connection
- Conseil Consultatif de Jeunes
- Desmond Tutu Peace Lab at Butler University
- E2C Togo
- Equal Access International
- FHI 360
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Gender Equality Initiative in International Affairs at George Washington University Elliot School of International Affairs
- Generations For Peace
- Hands of Peace
- Humanity United Action
- ICHILD International Children Rights Ambassadors Association
- International Association for Political Science Students
- International Civil Society Action Network
- Interpeace
- iPeace
- Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
- Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- MENA Coalition on YPS
- Mercy Corps
- National Partnership of Children & Youth in Peacebuilding
- Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative
- Never Again Coalition
- NewGen Peacebuilders
- ONE Campaign
- +Peace
- Peace Boat
- Peace Direct
- Peace Initiative Network
- Peacemaker 360
- Saferworld
- Search for Common Ground
- Seeds of Peace
- Society Initiatives Institute Ukraine
- STAND: The Student-led Movement to End Mass Atrocities
- UN Association of the National Capital Area
- UNICEF USA
- UNOY Peacebuilders
- World Learning
- Y Coalition - Bangladesh
- Yemeni Youth Forum for Peace
- Young Adult Empowerment Initiative
- The Youth Cafe
- Youth for Peace and Development
- Youth for Peace International
- Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA)
- Youth Network for Peace and Development - Mahottari
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