



UNHCR YOUTH REPORT | 2020–2022

Working with and for Youth in
Situations of Forced Displacement

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Colombia. World Refugee Day commemoration with art mural created by community members of El Libano, Cartagena

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FOREWORD

It is with great pride that I have witnessed the progress made in the last few years to engage and empower youth and promote their inclusion at multiple levels across UNHCR. This progress would not have been possible without the commitment of various divisions, the regional bureaux and the country operations of UNHCR, alongside that of the many partners and member States that we collaborate with and that have supported our youth interventions. These include the United States Government through its annual contributions for children and youth, and the Government of the Netherlands, through the first phase of its PROSPECTS Partnership initiative.

This report provides an overview of the most recent efforts made by UNHCR to meaningfully engage youth in situations of forced displacement. These efforts include bringing their views and experiences to the forefront in order to inform UNHCR's interventions and global advocacy, and encouraging them to lead positive change within their communities. As the examples shared in this report show, with an enabling environment and through structured and integrated support, young people can become essential actors, contributing to protection, responding to challenges and promoting solutions, for not only themselves but also their wider communities.

Our engagement with youth is enshrined in the 2018 UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity (hereafter the 2018 AGD Policy) and its core principles and approaches, which call for age-inclusive programming with the essential participation and inclusion of displaced and stateless persons of all ages, genders and diversities. As we work towards this goal, we must continue to strengthen and promote effective youth engagement across the whole of UNHCR as a common and integrated effort. We must actively listen to youth who are experiencing displacement and statelessness, support their aspirations and ambitions, and respond to their suggestions, working with them in a spirit of partnership. To achieve this, we must harness efforts and increase opportunities for cross-sectoral and inter-divisional collaboration on youth, most notably in the fields of education, livelihoods and protection.

Elizabeth Tan

Director, Division of International Protection
United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees

As the 2020–2022 Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) co-chairs, it was our responsibility to amplify the voices of young people experiencing forced displacement and statelessness. As young representatives with personal experience of forced displacement, we elevated the work that young people are doing from the local level to the global agenda, revealing their talent and highlighting the role they play in the communities in which they live. We believe in meaningful youth engagement in a spirit of partnership between youth and organizations such as UNHCR, where young people are fully involved in influencing decisions on activities and programmes that affect their lives, from planning, to implementation, to feedback and evaluation. Meaningful youth participation can enhance a young person's sense of connectedness, belonging and value, and it can promote peaceful coexistence within communities.

During our time engaging with the GYAC, first as members and later as co-chairs, we had the opportunity to meet and work with many young people from different cultures. We also participated in the drafting process for the Global Compact on Refugees, the outcome documents of the Global Refugee Forum, and the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. These opportunities enabled us to champion young people by amplifying the voices of displaced and stateless youth in these spaces. We had the opportunity to network and sit at the table with decision makers. We collaborated and shared expertise on services and inspired others to take sustainable actions to support young people experiencing displacement. Young people hold valuable knowledge about their peers' needs – knowledge that is based on their own experiences.

As the previous GYAC co-chairs, we recommend that UNHCR continue to include the voices of young people and support their meaningful engagement in policy- and decision-making, in the crafting of national strategies and operational plans, and in relevant decision-making bodies. Stakeholders should collaborate with young people to implement and work on the pledges committed during the 2019 Global Refugee Forum and to foster relations among young people, their communities, UNHCR's partners and other stakeholders. Opportunities should be created for young people experiencing displacement to be engaged in all aspects of UNHCR and its partners' operations.

To the new GYAC members and co-chairs, we are proud of the foundation we have built and we encourage you to continue bringing youth perspectives from your communities into the work of UNHCR. Take this opportunity to learn, grow, connect and collaborate with a diverse group of people and other youth networks. Develop mechanisms to recognize and identify youth protection issues and support young people to have equal access to resources, services, and decision-making at various levels.

Safia Ibrahimkhel and Barthelemy Mwanza

Global Youth Advisory Council co-chairs
2020–2022

1. BACKGROUND

Why UNHCR works with youth

1.1 Definitions of youth

UNHCR considers “youth” to be people aged between 15 and 24 years in line with the United Nations definition. Those aged between 10 and 19 years are considered “adolescents”, while the term “young people” seeks to capture both adolescents and youth aged between 10 and 24 years.¹

To recognize and respect the various regional, intergovernmental and national interpretations and understandings of these terms, flexibility must be applied to these definitions.² Flexibility also allows UNHCR to recognize the diverse experiences and unique challenges experienced by young people in situations of forced displacement.



© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard – Honduras. High Commissioner visits groups tackling forced displacement in San Pedro Sula.

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.
2. For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines “youth” as people aged between 15 and 24 years, although UNHCR understands that the meaning of the term varies in different societies around the world, and flexibility is required to accommodate national and regional youth policies and directives, as well as different contextual realities. For more information, see the UNHCR tipsheet “Applying the UNHCR age, gender and diversity policy to youth”, April 2021. Available from www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/60db21c64/tip-sheet-applying-unhcr-age-gender-diversity-policy-youth.html.

1.2 Demographics

The world is currently home to 1.8 billion young people – the largest generation of youth in history.³ However, UNHCR global trends and statistics do not currently disaggregate data by the age brackets associated with youth. Young people are often overlooked as a social group that have the potential to make essential contributions to protection solutions for themselves and their communities, and they continue to face significant obstacles to achieving their full potential.

Youth who are refugees, internally displaced, asylum-seekers, returnees and/or stateless are considered to be in situations of forced displacement. UNHCR works to engage these youth in situations of forced displacement, with a view to mainstreaming age and gender approaches in line with the 2018 AGD Policy⁴ and supporting protection

interventions that consider the specific contexts of young people. Through inclusive programming and accountability to affected young people that is based on engagement and participation, youth-focused protection contributes to developing youth capacities and skills, providing education and livelihood opportunities, and supporting physical and emotional well-being.

To ensure the meaningful and effective participation of young people, UNHCR works closely with organizations led by displaced and stateless youth as equal partners. In addition, efforts to engage with a wider demographic of young people, including youth from host communities as well as global youth supporters, reflect the diverse approaches that UNHCR undertakes to engage this important population group in the delivery of its mandate.

1.3 Challenges experienced by youth in situations of forced displacement

“The circumstances we live in often deny us the opportunity to enjoy our youth. We are often forced to compromise on our ambitions, our education and our employment. We often live in limbo not knowing of opportunities to prepare ourselves for an uncertain future

and not knowing when we can return to our home countries.”⁵

Youth can be understood as a critical development phase in life in which individuals advance from dependent childhood to independent adulthood. This phase of life is often characterized by the development of personal autonomy. During this period, youth experience multiple transitions, from moving

3. United Nations, “Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General”, United Nations, September 2021. Available from www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf.
4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.
5. Danish Refugee Council, “We believe in youth! Do you?”, December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs11/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.

through education and entering the labour market to forming families.

With limited access to post-primary education and livelihood opportunities, as well as limited legal and social status, youth who grow up in situations of both short-term and protracted displacement often experience multifaceted challenges and barriers in realizing these key life transitions. Therefore, the protection risks experienced by youth are often unique to their social group. Such risks can include, but are not limited to, early marriage, forced recruitment in criminal and armed groups, sale and exchange of sex, and exploitation in the labour market.⁶

While youth in situations of forced displacement face many challenges, youth consultations continuously highlight the most pressing across all geographic regions. Consultations undertaken in 2016 brought visibility to the 10 key challenges experienced by youth with a specific focus on those who are refugees⁷ (See Box 1). In 2021, the Danish Refugee Council, in cooperation with UNHCR, organized 10 regional youth dialogues with youth in different situations of forced displacement across all regions. This series

of consultations re-emphasized the core challenges related to education, employment, documentation and freedom of movement, discrimination, inclusion, social cohesion, mental health and psychosocial support, as well as meaningful participation. They also made specific reference to the needs and rights of youth in situations of forced displacement to access information and the Internet.⁸

These challenges were exponentially heightened by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which had unprecedented consequences on the protection and rights of youth in situations of forced displacement.⁹ Lockdowns and emergency restrictions on movement restricted livelihood opportunities, especially in the informal sector. Young people without digital access saw their education impacted as education systems shifted to online learning. Protection and health service provisions were also affected as funds were redirected towards COVID-19 responses.¹⁰ While recovery efforts have begun, youth in situations of forced displacement continue to experience challenges as a result.

Box 1:

Ten challenges facing refugee youth

1. Difficulties with legal recognition and obtaining personal documents

Youth stressed the challenges, complexities and delays in the processes to obtain asylum and related legal documents from UNHCR and/or local authorities, and the serious implications of not having them.

6. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.
7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "We believe in youth: Global youth consultations final report", November 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=57ff50c94.
8. Danish Refugee Council, "We believe in youth! Do you?", December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs11/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.
9. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugee rights & protection during COVID-19: What have we learned?", COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, 2022. Available from www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/62c6ce304/final-brief-refugees-rights-during-covid-19.html.
10. Taylor, Glyn, G. Gilbert, S. Hidalgo, M. Korhals Altes, B. Lewis, C. Robinson, E. Sandri, V. Stoianova and J. Ward, COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition, "Joint evaluation of the protection of the rights of refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic", United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, July 2022. Available from www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/62c6ceca4/es202206-joint-evaluation-protection-rights-refugees-during-covid-19-pandemic.html.

2. **Difficulty in accessing quality learning, education, and skills-building opportunities**
Youth consistently identified the difficulty of obtaining recognition for their existing qualifications and accessing quality learning, formal education, and skill-building opportunities as a serious challenge.
3. **Discrimination, racism, xenophobia and “culture clash”**
Youth noted discrimination, racism and xenophobia across all regions and emphasized how these issues can leave them feeling isolated and marginalized.
4. **Few youth employment and livelihood opportunities**
Youth emphasized they would rather work than depend on humanitarian aid and expressed frustration at the limited employment and livelihood opportunities available to them.
5. **Gender inequality, discrimination, exploitation and violence, including towards youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other diverse identities (LGBTIQ+)**
Youth highlighted their concerns about gender inequality and discrimination as challenges in and of themselves, but also as underlying causes of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence, child and forced marriage, sexual assault and rape.
6. **Poor access to youth-sensitive health care, including psychosocial support**
Youth highlighted a lack of access to quality health care as a major concern and noted in particular the need for youth-sensitive sexual and reproductive health care and psychosocial support.
7. **Lack of safety, security and freedom of movement**
Youth expressed concerns about safety, security and freedom of movement linked to xenophobia and difficulty with documents. In some locations, they also highlighted police harassment as well as arrest and detention.
8. **Challenges for unaccompanied youth**
Youth stressed the specific protection and practical challenges for unaccompanied youth, including the difficult transition and a lack of preparation for those who turn 18, “age out” and are no longer afforded additional protection and support, but who often still need guidance and assistance as well as access to rights and protection.
9. **Lack of opportunities to participate, be engaged or access decision makers**
Youth identified a lack of empowerment and engagement opportunities as factors that limit youth involvement in decision-making. They have few opportunities to analyse issues, devise solutions, share their ideas with decision makers and be heard.
10. **Lack of information about asylum, refugee rights and available services**
In all the consultations, youth highlighted challenges related to the lack of relevant, honest and transparent information about the asylum process, refugee rights, available services, and the society and culture of their country of asylum.

Source: “We believe in youth”: Global youth consultations final report”¹¹

11. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “We believe in youth: Global youth consultations final report”, November 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=57ff50c94.



© UNHCR/Catalina Betancur Sánchez – Colombia. Strengthening of youth collectives and community protection networks.

1.4 Youth as agents of change

“We are intelligent, skilled and motivated young people who have experienced forced displacement. We want to break free of being stigmatized as refugees. If given a chance, we will not be your ‘refugee problem’ but citizens who will co-create solutions in and with the community.”¹²

Recognizing that youth in situations of forced displacement experience heightened challenges and risks, UNHCR works with

and for young people as **agents of change**. Through harnessing their innovation, creativity and energy, UNHCR recognizes that young people are **positive assets** with the capacity to make considerable contributions to their own development and that of their communities. Youth are essential partners who can share invaluable insights into their lived experience and provide contributions and leadership to protection solutions.

Youth are **rights holders** and efforts to ensure their **meaningful participation** in all aspects of UNHCR programming and service delivery continue to be strengthened. This is demonstrated by an ongoing **commitment**

12. Danish Refugee Council, “We believe in youth! Do you?”, December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs11/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.

to increase the engagement of youth in all processes, in line with the core actions of the 2018 AGD Policy. UNHCR seeks to enable engagement with youth throughout its programming cycle, from needs identification, participatory assessments and designing strategies for protection and solutions, to planning and implementation, as well as in the evaluation of programmes and policies that concern them.¹³ This serves to ensure that UNHCR operations remain committed to being both relevant and responsive to the youth populations that they serve and accountable to the young people for and

with whom they work.¹⁴ It also ensures youth access their right to participate in the decisions that impact their lives.

By engaging young people in decision-making, UNHCR continues to strengthen its accountability towards this important social group. This ensures that the views and contributions of young people affected by forced displacement are incorporated at all levels – from localized programmes and country-level operations through to regional decision-making and global advocacy.

1.5 Ten years of UNHCR action for youth

“The active participation and engagement of refugee and host community youth will be supported by States and relevant stakeholders, including through projects that recognize, utilize and develop their capacities and skills, and foster their physical and emotional well-being.”¹⁵

In recent years, UNHCR has made significant progress in promoting youth engagement and empowerment within the framework of commitments outlined in the “Conclusion of the Executive Committee on youth (no. 113)”,¹⁶ and the United Nations Youth Strategy 2030.¹⁷

The 2018 AGD Policy also reiterates UNHCR’s commitment to tapping into the vast potential of working with youth in situations of forced displacement as well as host community youth.¹⁸ These commitments to work with and for youth were articulated in the seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth.¹⁹ The Core Actions provide a mutually enforcing framework to ensure that all UNHCR youth-relevant programmes and services adopt an inclusive and holistic approach. This progress and commitment is demonstrated in over 10 years of action for youth, as follows:

2013 – Global review of UNHCR’s engagement with displaced youth: In 2013, UNHCR published a landmark review of its engagement with displaced youth. This review analysed the agency’s mandate to work with

13. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Listen and learn: Participatory assessment with children and adolescents”, July 2012. Available from www.refworld.org/docid/4ffe4af2.html.
14. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Operational guidance on accountability to affected people (AAP)”, September 2020. Available from www.unhcr.org/handbooks/aap/documents/UNHCR-AAP_Operational_Guidance.pdf.
15. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees”, November 2018. Available from www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4.pdf.
16. Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, “Conclusion of the Executive Committee on youth No. 113 (LXVII) 2016”, 6 October 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/docid/57f7b5a84.html.
17. United Nations, “Youth 2030: Working with and for young people”, September 2018. Available from www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf.
18. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.
19. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Core Actions for Refugee Youth, November 2016, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html>.

youth through its policies, guidelines and strategies, institutional infrastructure, funding, programmes, and monitoring and evaluation processes. The global review analysed the characteristics of youth programming in UNHCR; reflected on the conceptual, institutional and operational reasons behind the perceived “invisibility of youth”, despite the demographic relevance of this age group among displaced and stateless people; and identified strategic recommendations for action that would subsequently guide UNHCR’s work with youth over the following decade.²⁰

2014 – Launch of the Youth Initiative

Fund: On the basis of the review’s recommendations, the Youth Initiative Fund (YIF) was developed. This provided, for the first time, the budget and guidance to enable young people to engage in the design, implementation and monitoring of community-based protection projects within their communities.²¹

2016 – “Conclusion of the Executive Committee on youth (no. 113)”: This conclusion recognized youth as an increasingly large proportion of populations served by UNHCR and reaffirmed the importance of mainstreaming age- and gender-sensitive approaches. Noting that youth in situations of forced displacement have particular vulnerabilities and may be at heightened risk due to their situation, the Executive Committee conclusion highlighted the value of enabling youth participation in humanitarian assistance and other decision-making processes.²²

2016 – Global Refugee Youth Consultations:

Working together in 2016, UNHCR and the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC) organized and led year-long Global Refugee Youth Consultations. Almost 1,500 youth from 34 countries participated in this exercise to capture insights and data about the challenges that refugee youth face. Youth participants shared their ideas on protection and solutions, which were consolidated into the 10 “challenges for refugee youth”.²³

2016 – The Core Actions for Refugee Youth:

As a result of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, the seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth were developed. Although they primarily refer to refugee youth, the Core Actions continue to serve as a framework for UNHCR and other humanitarian actors to structure their work with and for youth in situations of forced displacement. The Core Actions emphasize that working with youth as partners and as leaders helps advance protection solutions.²⁴

2017 – The Global Youth Advisory Council:

The High Commissioner appointed the first Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC) in December 2017 to further advance UNHCR’s work with and for youth. The GYAC enables young people experiencing displacement and statelessness to share their perspectives and their experience, become agents of change within their communities and ensure their communities have an input into UNHCR work at all levels. Supported by two co-chairs that lead coordination and participation, GYAC members have a two-year tenure on the council.²⁵

20. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR’s engagement with displaced youth”, 2013. Available from www.unhcr.org/513f37bb9.pdf.

21. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ Youth Initiative Fund, “Youth in action report 2017-2019”, 2021. Available from www.unhcr.org/63be796e4.

22. Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme, “Conclusion of the Executive Committee on youth No. 113 (LXVII) 2016”, 6 October 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/docid/57f7b5a84.html.

23. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “We believe in youth: Global youth consultations final report”, November 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=57ff50c94.

24. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “We believe in youth: Global youth consultations final report”, November 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=57ff50c94.

25. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Global Youth Advisory Council, Annual Report 2018, December 2018. Available from <https://www.unhcr.org/5c90f4d84.pdf>.



© UNHCR/Sonia Gonzalez Suarez – Zimbabwe. Young refugee empowers young refugees and supports them in creating their social entrepreneurship.

2018 – The Global Compact on Refugees: Adopted in December 2018 by the United Nations General Assembly, the Global Compact on Refugees translates the commitments made by 193 United Nations member States upon their adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees

and Migrants. The compact sets out to enhance international cooperation in order to improve conditions for refugees around the globe. The GYAC contributed in the form of recommendations and pledges. The final version of the compact included 18 specific references to youth.²⁶

Box 2:

The Global Compact on Refugees, paragraph 77

“The empowerment of refugee and host community youth, building on their talent, potential and energy, supports resilience and eventual solutions. The active participation and engagement of refugee and host community youth will be supported by States and relevant stakeholders, including through projects that recognize, utilize and

26. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR Global Compact on Refugees”, November 2018. Available from www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4.pdf and the related section of the Global Compact on Refugees web page with resources, tools and good practices: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/good-practices/we-believe-youth-invest-youth-build-community-resilience>.

develop their capacities and skills, and foster their physical and emotional well-being.”

Source: Available from www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4.pdf.

2018 – The Age, Gender and Diversity Policy

Policy: The 2018 AGD Policy includes six areas of action to ensure accountability to affected people. Endorsed by the High Commissioner in 2011 and strengthened in 2017, the 2018 policy was designed to incorporate the learning generated from previous efforts. Mandatory for all operations across all areas of UNHCR’s work, this policy sets out 10 core actions to ensure age-, gender- and diversity-inclusive programming and to advance inclusion and participation as well as gender equality, with specific reference to adolescent girls.²⁷

2019 – The Tertiary Refugee Student Network

Network: Students, youth, UNHCR and other

partners recognize the value of the Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) as an advocacy platform that continually highlights the importance of educational opportunities for refugees. Working with refugee students, TRSN is engaged in increasing awareness of the benefits of education in their communities. This network is a crucially important mission by refugee students, with the support of UNHCR, to bring refugee voices to the heart of discussions and decisions about their lives. Through this platform, refugee students and alumni create synergies to support each other in developing their communities and encouraging other refugees to play their roles in life-changing areas.



© UNHCR/Charity Nzomo – Kenya. Delegation having a Focus Group Discussion with students from Kalobeyei Settlement Secondary School, a Camp-based school for refugees and host community learners.

27. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.

2019 – The Global Refugee Forum: The first Global Refugee Forum brought the international community together in 2019 to demonstrate solidarity with the world’s refugees and the countries and communities that host them. States and other stakeholders announced pledges to improve the lives of refugees and their host communities. By December 2022, of the 1,680 or so pledges submitted since the start of the process, over 140 youth-sensitive or youth-inclusive pledges had been submitted by a diverse range of actors. The majority of them were submitted by civil society organizations, followed by States and international organizations. These pledges demonstrate the increased urgency of working with and for youth to create pathways for sustainable futures for both refugee and host community youth.²⁸

2021 – “IASC [Inter-Agency Standing Committee] guidelines on working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises”: In response to the 2016 collective commitment by more than 60 humanitarian actors, including UNHCR, through the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action,²⁹ the IASC published the “IASC guidelines on working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises”. This provides a framework through which the priorities of young people can be addressed and youth in humanitarian settings and protracted crises can be meaningfully engaged. As a participating member of the compact, UNHCR helped develop the guidelines and continues to mainstream them across its youth-relevant activities.³⁰

2021 – “Our Common Agenda”: In 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General published the “Our Common Agenda” report, dedicating one of the 12 commitments to advance multilateralism to “listening to and working with youth”. UNHCR remains committed to contributing to United Nations actions listed in the report, cooperating with United Nations organizations (including the Envoy on Youth and the newly established UN Youth Office) to advance the rights of refugee youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, and designing guidance on integrating participatory approaches – as well as age, gender and diversity considerations – into the work of global institutions.³¹

2021 – Regional youth dialogues: To ensure that youth are systematically included in the policy processes and activities of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum, the Danish Refugee Council and UNHCR co-led a joint initiative with the support of representatives from the Global Youth Refugee Network, the Tertiary Refugee Student Network, ActionAid’s Global Platforms, the UNHCR GYAC, the IASC Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Through the joint initiative, 10 regional youth dialogues were conducted with youth from 40 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and South America. Recommendations put forward as a result of the consultations include investing in youth leadership and youth-led initiatives, enabling youth participation as a way of working, creating more education and employment opportunities, and countering discrimination.³²

28. UNHCR, “UNHCR Global Refugee Forum 2019”. Available from www.unhcr.org/programme-and-practical-information.ht and the Global Compact on Refugees landing page: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/>.

29. See www.youthcompact.org/.

30. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, “With us & for us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises”, UNICEF and NRC for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, November 2020. Available from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-02/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20Working%20with%20and%20for%20Young%20People%20in%20Humanitarian%20and%20Protracted%20Crises_0.pdf.

31. United Nations, “Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General”, United Nations, September 2021. Available from www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf.

32. Danish Refugee Council, “We believe in youth! Do you?”, December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs1/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.

2021 – High-Level Officials Meeting: This meeting provided an opportunity for senior government officials and representatives of relevant stakeholder groups to take stock of progress made in achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, including through the pledges and contributions made and initiatives announced at the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019. The first midterm event of the High-Level Officials Meeting was convened in 2021. With the support of the

Danish Refugee Council, UNHCR’s Division of Resilience and Solutions and its Division of International Protection facilitated the development of the “We believe in youth” report. Informed by the regional youth dialogues (outlined in the previous section on challenges), the report set out youth recommendations to the High-Level Officials Meeting. Recommendations were shared through a digital event called Aspirations versus Realities.

1.6 Youth as a UNHCR cross-sectoral priority

Recognizing that youth account for an increasingly large proportion of people with and for whom UNHCR works, the organization has made efforts to engage with them within all divisions at different levels. This includes engagement in regional bureaux and country operations through to establishing platforms for young people to engage in global advocacy activities. Divisions within UNHCR have contributed to UNHCR’s youth agenda in the following ways:

Division of Resilience and Solutions: This division is committed to working with and supporting refugee, stateless and youth in situations of internal displacement on their journeys to self-reliance and sustainable futures through a range of education and economic inclusion pathways. The Education Section of Division of Resilience and Solutions collaborates with youth to amplify the importance of education as a mean for protection and a priority for international refugee response and to identify solutions. The Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Unit promotes livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational education and training opportunities for youth.

Division of External Relations: This division contributes to the youth agenda in several ways. The Global Communications Service engages young supporters by building grass-roots networks and clubs, communicating

with millions of people on social media, and sharing information on protection for refugee youth. The Partnership and Coordination Service forges partnerships with organizations with a focus on youth and sport and helps involve young refugees in UNHCR policy processes and events. Meanwhile, the Private Sector Partnerships Service explores ways to expand private donations in support of youth-focused initiatives.

Division of International Protection: Through its management of major UNHCR youth grants – notably those supported by the United States Government’s contribution and by the PROSPECTS Partnership initiative funded by the Dutch Government – as well as through the provision of technical support, content-level oversight and capacity strengthening, the Division of International Protection in cooperation with regional bureaux supports youth inclusion at multiple levels of UNHCR’s protection activities. From community-based protection interventions through to global advocacy, the division also supports UNHCR’s GYAC and facilitates its members’ participation in dialogues at the regional and global levels to share their experience, ideas and recommendations in order to shape policies and strategies for protection and solutions.

New York Office: The New York Office supports UNHCR’s work on youth at the inter-



© UNHCR/Duniya Aslam Khan – UNHCR management meets trainees, staff and officials at the inauguration of the Sweswe vocational training centre in Kyaka II refugee settlement, south-west Uganda.

agency global level and aims to bring visibility to UNHCR's priorities and efforts in this area to ensure that youth in situations of forced displacement are considered and reflected in United Nations policies, accountability frameworks and processes emanating from the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Division of Human Resources: This division contributes to the UNHCR youth agenda by managing the UNHCR internship programme and the Refugee UN Volunteer programme. Both initiatives create opportunities for youth to work with UNHCR to deliver its mandate.

Global Learning and Development Centre (GLDC): This centre gives UNHCR staff access to comprehensive learning and development programmes. The GLDC has been involved in developing capacity strengthening initiatives on youth participation while also undertaking efforts to mainstream youth across a number of learning programmes.

The next section (Section 2) showcases promising youth engagement practices delivered and supported by country operations, regional bureaux and the various UNHCR divisions between 2020 and 2022.

Section 3 details the activities undertaken by the GYAC between 2020 and 2022, highlighting key lessons learned.

Section 4 provides highlights of inter-agency collaborations and partnerships undertaken in support of these efforts since 2020.

Section 5 shares key recommendations, with a view to strengthening UNHCR's work with and for youth moving forward.

2. OPERATIONALIZING THE CORE ACTIONS FOR REFUGEE YOUTH



© UNHCR/Kepler student and photographer Samuel Nsabimana – The Tertiary Refugee Student Network met in Kigali Rwanda where they participated in a workshop to strengthen 15by30 transitions to higher education and employment organized by WUSC, MCF, UNHCR and DREEM YAC (November 2022).

2.1 Achieving the Core Actions for Refugee Youth through cross-sector collaboration

This section spotlights **promising youth engagement practices** delivered by UNHCR, its partners, youth-led organizations and other cooperating humanitarian actors with and for youth from 2020 to 2022. Selected initiatives build on the approach started by the Youth Initiative Fund (YIF), but go beyond Division of International Protection-specific initiatives, thus demonstrating UNHCR's corporate commitment to youth.

Within the framework of the **Core Actions for Refugee Youth**,³³ the promising practices identified have supported opportunities and mechanisms that enable **youth to participate**, to **build skills and capacities**, to **access opportunities** and to **influence national and international policies, strategies and programmes**.

Box 3:

Seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth

- **Core Action 1:** Empower refugee youth through meaningful engagement
- **Core Action 2:** Recognize, utilize and develop refugee youth capacities and skills
- **Core Action 3:** Ensure refugee youth-focused protection
- **Core Action 4:** Support refugee youth physical and emotional well-being
- **Core Action 5:** Facilitate refugee youth networking and information-sharing
- **Core Action 6:** Reinforce refugee youth as connectors and peacebuilders
- **Core Action 7:** Generate data and evidence on refugee youth to promote accountability to youth

Source: "'We believe in youth': Global youth consultations final report"³⁴

The Core Actions for Refugee Youth continue to be the main framework that UNHCR utilizes to represent the needs and aspirations of youth worldwide. It is important to underline that engagement of youth with UNHCR goes beyond those in refugee situations. Reflecting the various contexts in which UNHCR operates, the promising practices represent the breadth of work delivered for and with youth in situations of forced displacement and

statelessness. This includes engagement with young refugees and asylum-seekers, young people in situations of internal displacement, young people experiencing statelessness or at risk of statelessness, and young returnees. Promising practices have also been shared, such as those that have successfully engaged youth from host communities as well as global youth supporters.

33. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Core Actions for Refugee Youth, November 2016, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html>.

34. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "We believe in youth: Global youth consultations final report", November 2016. Available from www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=57ff50c94.

The promising practices highlight how young people in situations of forced displacement have actively participated in and led protection-oriented initiatives that have contributed to protection outcomes. These initiatives have harnessed the potential of young people by building on their existing skills and knowledge, and have created opportunities for them to engage positively with their communities and share their lived experience of displacement or statelessness with wider audiences. In turn, their participation has helped address the multifaceted needs to which UNHCR seeks to respond, ultimately enhancing UNHCR's operations globally by promoting an age, gender and diversity lens in UNHCR's operations and activities for displaced and stateless youth and their host communities.

For each Core Action, a range of **initiative spotlights** have been selected. The selected initiatives represent cross-sectoral work on youth undertaken by multiple divisions within UNHCR, often in close cooperation with regional bureaux. Each spotlight includes a short overview of the context in which the initiative was undertaken and a summary of its activities. Building on the "IASC guidelines on working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises", each spotlight also includes highlights of how youth participation was enabled within the initiative. The highlights explore the level at which youth were engaged as actors through **consultative** or **collaborative** participation or through participation that was **led by young people themselves**.

Box 4:

Levels of youth participation

- **Consultative participation:** adult initiated; adult-led and managed; lacking possibility for young people to control outcomes; recognizing the added value that young people's perspective, knowledge and experience can contribute
- **Collaborative participation:** adult initiated; involving partnership with young people; enabling young people to influence or challenge both process and outcome; allowing for increasing levels of self-directed action by young people over a period of time
- **Participation led by young people:** the issues of concern being identified by young people themselves; adults serving as facilitators rather than leaders; young people controlling the process and the outcomes

Source: "IASC guidelines on working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises"³⁵

The highlights provide examples of where and how youth were engaged in programming activities such as in decision-making, activity planning, implementation, and evaluation, and how the principles of meaningful participation (see Box 5) were adopted. The report also includes lessons learned from implementing each Core Action.

As UNHCR continues its efforts to make humanitarian action more effective and inclusive, the following promising practices demonstrate what can be achieved when working with young people as active partners and agents of change to improve protection outcomes and work towards solutions to displacement.

35. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "With us & for us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises", UNICEF and NRC for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, November 2020. Available from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-02/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20Working%20with%20and%20for%20Young%20People%20in%20Humanitarian%20and%20Protracted%20Crises_0.pdf.

Box 5:**Principles of meaningful youth engagement**

The following 10 principles of engagement developed by the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development provide the framework through which meaningful youth engagement has been considered in the initiative spotlights:

1. **Safe:** Ensure the physical and emotional security of the youth engaged. Always follow national or organizational safeguarding procedures as well as child protection rights and responsibilities for youth under the age of 18.
2. **Respectful:** Respect youth as contributors, innovators and knowledge-holders on the basis of their perspectives and experiences.
3. **Valued:** Value youth capacities and contributions as you value those of adults. Encourage youth to express views and ideas freely.
4. **Inclusive:** Provide equal opportunities for all, regardless of cultural and social backgrounds, education, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, context, political and economic status, or other characteristics. Provide opportunities for traditionally underserved youth to engage, including those not members of any structures. Where relevant, encourage engaged youth to self-organize in inclusive, democratic structures that are informed by diverse views and experiences.
5. **Voluntary:** Give youth the opportunity to choose the most appropriate area or form of engagement, or to discontinue at any stage of the process.
6. **Transparent:** Clearly set expectations at the outset.
7. **Informative and accountable:** Provide engaged youth with clear, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their role. Explain to youth how their inputs are used, interpreted and have influenced outcomes with transparency, establishing a communication feedback loop.
8. **Youth-friendly:** Invest in youth-friendly and age-appropriate environments, processes, structures, mechanisms and materials. Use participatory and inclusive methodologies and tools to support youth engagement. Ensure there is adequate time and resources.
9. **Supportive:** Enable engaged youth and their structures to build their own capacities. Pay special attention to the capacity needs of traditionally underserved youth and organizations and networks that work with them.
10. **Advocate:** Sensitize non-youth actors engaging with youth to value and adopt the principles of meaningful engagement.

While many initiatives have demonstrated and embedded multiple principles within the implementation of their activities, each spotlight highlights two or three specific examples to demonstrate the practical ways in which meaningful youth engagement has been enabled.

Source: "Meaningfully engaging with youth: Guidance and training for UN staff"³⁶

36. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Meaningfully engaging with youth", Paris, 2019. Available from www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2021/05/Meaningfully-engaging-youth-Guidance-training-UN-staff.pdf.

CORE ACTION 1:

Empower refugee youth through meaningful engagement

“Humanitarian actors must work to empower young refugees by facilitating opportunities for youth to voice their ideas, engage in decision-making processes, and develop their leadership potential.”³⁷

UNHCR defines participation as “the full and equal involvement of all members of the community in decision-making processes and activities that affect their lives.”³⁸ Participation is recognized as an essential approach within the 2018 AGD Policy to ensure accountability to affected people. The policy makes specific reference to youth engagement.

“Modes of participation need to be in place throughout the operations management cycle. They need to be accessible to all groups in a community, with particular attention to at-risk groups such as minorities, people with disabilities, and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as under-

represented groups such as adolescents, youth and older people.”³⁹

Meaningful youth engagement recognizes the value that young people’s perspectives, knowledge and experiences can bring to UNHCR initiatives and increases ownership among this important social group. Core Action 1 has been enabled by actively engaging with youth on an ongoing and transparent basis in all phases of programming, as well as by supporting them to analyse, understand, advocate and act on issues that are important to them.⁴⁰ Opportunities to facilitate collaborative approaches that bring youth together with other actors to develop, implement and review policies, programmes and operations have been integral to achieving this. Partnering with and supporting youth-led groups, organizations, networks and structures has also been successful in enabling youth to voice their concerns and ideas as well as to exercise their agency in addressing protection issues.

Each of the spotlights selected demonstrates a promising practice that has helped enable **youth leadership**, facilitate **youth participation** and **decision-making**, and support **youth-led advocacy**.

37. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

38. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “A community-based approach in UNHCR operations”, March 2008. Available from www.refworld.org/docid/47da54722.html.

39. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html.

40. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Compact guidance for senior managers: accountability to affected people (AAP)”, April 2020. Available from www.unhcr.org/handbooks/aap/documents/UNHCR-AAP_Compact%20Guidance-A5-2020.pdf.

1.1 Decision-making spotlight: youth decision-making in Bangladesh’s Rohingya refugee camps

“Engaging actively with youth in [sic] an ongoing and meaningful basis to seek their ideas and input on issues that are important to them and their communities”⁴¹

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Bangladesh country operation, in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

Bangladesh

FOCUS:

Refugee youth

YEARS:

2021–2022



© UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau – Bangladesh. Rohingya girls attend a youth club in Kutupalong refugee camp.

41. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

Since the early 1990s, over a million Rohingya refugees have fled violence in Myanmar in successive waves of displacement, including most recently in 2017, to seek refuge in Bangladesh. The youth community groups engage male and female youth as protection actors who organize discussions and deliver service projects in their communities. Youth community groups operate across 33 camps that host the Rohingya refugee population in the areas of Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char. In the first week of each month, these groups meet to identify community needs and interests. Once each group has selected the issue on which they want to focus, they plan a response to address it. Together they decide whether the community need is best addressed through a community-led discussion or a service project.

Community-led discussions have covered a variety of topics such as maintaining hygiene

for disease prevention and the negative consequences of child marriage. The service projects led by young people have ranged from small-scale infrastructure repairs to handwashing campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that many host community farmers were using plastic bags to transport produce to the market, female members of youth community groups made baskets to support transportation, fostering peaceful coexistence between the refugee and host communities. In March 2021, some male members of youth community groups responded to a fire that caused widespread damage in a number of camps, providing immediate emergency support to supplement the ongoing emergency response. In the aftermath of the fire, they carried food rations from distribution points to older community members' homes, organized a clothing drive and helped repair the shelters of female-headed households who needed support.



1,711

members of youth community groups



30 youth

with disabilities participate in youth community groups



2,598

youth-led community service projects



1,712

discussions led by youth groups on topics of relevance for communities



50 per cent

of youth community groups are led by young women

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Youth led their community discussion and service projects. Although initially established

by UNHCR, the youth groups were autonomous and worked together to design and implement their service projects. UNHCR and its partners provided coordination support and guidance, training opportunities and a small monthly budget. When required,

they supported procurement and camp permissions.

- **VOLUNTARY:** Participation in the group was voluntary and each month, members could choose the most appropriate form of engagement or decide not to participate in the identified activity based on their personal interest. Different members took on specific roles and responsibilities.
- **INCLUSION:** With the support of UNHCR’s partner Humanity & Inclusion, the youth

community groups received training on disability inclusion. This helped youth group members to target services projects that benefit community members with disabilities such as infrastructure modifications including installing raised beds, ramps and bamboo handrails. These accommodations reduced environmental barriers and, as a result, more youth with disabilities were encouraged to join the youth community groups.

1.2 Leadership and advocacy spotlight: refugee youth leadership, advocacy and public speaking training

“Supporting youth to analyse, understand, and advocate on issues of importance to them and their communities”⁴²

INITIATIVE LED BY:	Education Section (Division of Resilience and Solutions), in cooperation with country operations in the East and Horn of Africa and the Regional Bureau for the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes
SCALE:	Regional, East and Horn of Africa
LOCATIONS:	Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, the Sudan and Uganda.
FOCUS:	Refugee youth
PARTNERS:	UNHCR in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF
YEARS:	Continuous in 2021–2023
SUPPORTED BY:	The PROSPECTS Partnership

42. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

Despite the challenging circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic, displaced youth have continued to reinforce their role as connectors and contributors by bridging social, ethnic and geographical divides. Building on the success of the Global Leadership Programme in 2021, the 2022 Regional Leadership Programme recognized the need to continue to provide targeted and structured support to youth leaders and youth groups that are already leading change. The six-month online training series supported refugee youth and student leaders to develop their knowledge and practical skills to advance their youth-led initiatives on education, livelihoods, protection and solutions for young refugees.

This is a continuous training and its curriculum was co-designed in collaboration with partners and the Regional Bureau for the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes in consultation with regional youth leaders from the Tertiary Refugee Student Network and previous trainees from the Global Leadership Programme. All young refugees

were supported with Internet connectivity and data bundles. The training covered diverse topics that enabled young leaders to tell their own unique stories and speak with confidence on the complex issues they have first-hand experience of, equipping them to participate effectively and lead change in their communities.

The training gave youth leaders access to regional youth networks, facilitating opportunities to share ideas and experiences. At the end of the training series, young leaders applied the advocacy skills they had acquired through presenting their youth-led initiatives to access UNHCR's funding via a refugee-led grant agreement. Young leaders from Ethiopia focused on getting women into education, while young leaders in Uganda put forward their initiative on the Provision of Access to Education for Children with Disabilities. The training series reinforced the role of refugee youth as contributors, mobilizers, advocates and essential partners in humanitarian and development responses to crisis and conflict.



Eight

refugee-led organizations have secured funding for their projects.



20

refugee youth initiatives have been created.



10

refugee youth networks have built their capacities and scaled up their work within their communities.



36 refugee youth

have participated in 18 high-level events including the 26th and 27th sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP), the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2019 and the high-level panel with the United Nations Secretary-General during the Transforming Education Summit in New York in 2022.

Training topics:



Leadership and critical thinking; Use of media and delivering positive messaging; Professional profile and personal branding; Higher education paths for displaced youth; From learning to earning; From resilience to action; Employment and entrepreneurship; Organizational capacity-building; Content creation and speech writing; Peacebuilding, mediation and conflict resolution and; Effective advocacy and youth mobilization.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Selected youth leaders work independently through their own youth-led initiatives.
- **SUPPORT:** The training facilitated capacity strengthening of young refugee leaders and facilitated resource mobilization in support of their activities. The training topics were selected to equip youth leaders with the capacities, tools and platforms for them to act and exert influence on the issues that impact their lives and their communities.
- **VALUE:** The programme values youth leaders and recognizes the contributions that they make to society as mobilizers, advocates and partners.

1.3 Participation spotlight: youth participation and engagement in El Salvador

“Supporting collaborative approaches that bring together refugee youth with other actors to develop, review, and implement policies and practices on issues of importance to youth”⁴³

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR El Salvador country operation in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for the Americas and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

El Salvador – San Salvador, Soyapango

43. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

FOCUS:

Youth in situations of internal displacement and youth at risk of displacement

YEAR:

2022 (continuation in 2023)

SUPPORTED BY:

United States Government (part of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) contribution for children and youth 2022)

Located in the metropolitan area of San Salvador, Soyapango is the fourth most populous city of El Salvador. The area is characterized by a significant presence of communities in situations of internal displacement, and an elevated level of violence among competing non-State criminal groups that are fuelling violence, social tension and mistrust. Youth from these communities are often perceived to be associated with the violence of armed gangs and, as a result, experience increased stigma. In response, UNHCR established a youth programme with a view to mobilizing the youth population to become protection actors and mitigate the risks of displacement, violence, forced recruitment and stigmatization in their communities. With a view to strengthening and consolidating existing youth structures, seven youth committees were engaged to participate.

Five of the committees were established youth structures and two were set up with the support of UNHCR.

Through their engagement, members of the youth committees participated in consultations as part of the revision and design of a local youth policy in Soyapango. The youth committees then received training and funding from UNHCR to design and implement their own youth-led community initiatives. The funded youth-led initiatives delivered by the youth committees included a project to revitalize local public spaces to make them safe and mitigate the risks of violence, a project that utilizes sports for development to contribute to peaceful coexistence, and a project that provides vocational training to support access to livelihood opportunities.



Seven

youth committees were engaged in the initiative.



60 per cent

of youth committee members were young women.



Seven

youth-led community initiatives were delivered by youth committees.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION: UNHCR** consulted youth on their needs and priorities to inform the revision and design of a local youth policy. Youth committees are direct implementers of their youth-led initiatives.
 - SUPPORT:** Youth committees were supported to build their own capacities through designing and implementing their own community initiatives. UNHCR served
- as a facilitator, providing guidance, training and funds for implementation. The grant provided was directly managed by the members.
- VALUE:** During the local youth policy consultations, youth committee members were encouraged to express their views, advocating for the changes they wanted to see. The youth committee members and young people consulted during the local youth policy review process contributed valuable knowledge based on their experiences.



© UNHCR/Tito Herrera – El Salvador. Assistant High Commissioner visits El Salvador on regional mission.

Box 6:**Five lessons learned from the selected spotlights**

1. **Barriers to meaningful participation** highlighted by engaged youth include a lack of confidence and trust in the institutions that seek to engage them. Working in partnership with youth-led and grass-roots community organizations as trusted partners has proved to be an effective approach to engage and build trust with young people experiencing forced displacement. Youth also identified the need to prioritize income-generating livelihood opportunities over participating in other activities. Opportunities that support either **personal development or organizational capacity strengthening** through training add value for the young people engaged.
2. Different groups of young people experience **different barriers to participation**. Intersectionality must be considered from the outset to ensure inclusion. In some contexts, young women were less likely to engage in youth-led community initiatives due to cultural factors. The experience of working with youth community groups in Bangladesh highlighted the importance of providing **clear, accessible and age-sensitive information** to young women and their support networks. Hosting separate male and female youth groups also encouraged young women to participate in community initiatives.
3. Youth-focused initiatives require continuous mobilization and support. **Flexibility** is essential when supporting youth-led initiatives and service projects. To ensure sustainability, projects require flexible delivery timelines and budgets to ensure youth groups retain their autonomy to identify and respond to their community's needs.
4. With a view to sharing ideas and experiences and enhancing collaboration, youth leaders and youth groups request opportunities to **exchange and develop their own networks** through in-person and online engagement. To support **online participation** among young leaders, Internet and logistical support must be provided.
5. To ensure youth-led initiatives have an impact, facilitating **multi-stakeholder collaboration** and engaging with other actors at the local level is required. Through collaborating with local authorities in El Salvador and working with the camp administration in Bangladesh, youth-led initiatives received local-level support.

CORE ACTION 2:

Recognize, utilize and develop refugee youth capacities and skills

“Humanitarian actors must recognise and build upon young refugees’ existing knowledge, skills, capacities, and qualifications; support access to quality and inclusive learning opportunities including formal and non-formal education, skills building, and jobs training; and facilitate employment, and livelihoods opportunities.”⁴⁴

Core Action 2 has been enabled through expanding access and improving quality across the full range of learning, training and livelihood opportunities available for young people with and for whom UNHCR works. Efforts to identify, support and develop

young talents and capacities and enhance financing opportunities have been essential to achieving this. Learning opportunities that facilitate protection, integration and peacebuilding have also been successful in supporting youth to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to become key actors in this space. Through peer-to-peer engagement, as well as transfer of knowledge and skills in projects, young people have themselves played an essential role in increasing outreach and access as well as advocating for quality and inclusive learning and livelihood opportunities for young people in situations of forced displacement.

Each of the spotlights selected demonstrates a promising practice that has helped create **opportunities** that support inclusive access to **learning** and **employment** for youth within UNHCR.

2.1 Opportunity spotlight: the Tertiary Refugee Student Network and the peer-to-peer solutions advisers project

“Enhancing financing to enable more youth to access secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, skills-building, and other learning opportunities.”⁴⁵

44. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

45. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Education Section (Division of Resilience and Solutions) in cooperation with country operation support

SCALE:

Global, regional, national

LOCATION:

Tertiary Refugee Student Network leaders are based in all regions. The peer-to-peer solutions advisers project will be piloted in several countries.

FOCUS:

Refugee-led student networks, refugee students and alumni, refugee youth

PARTNERS:

The Tertiary Refugee Student Network

YEARS:

2020–2024

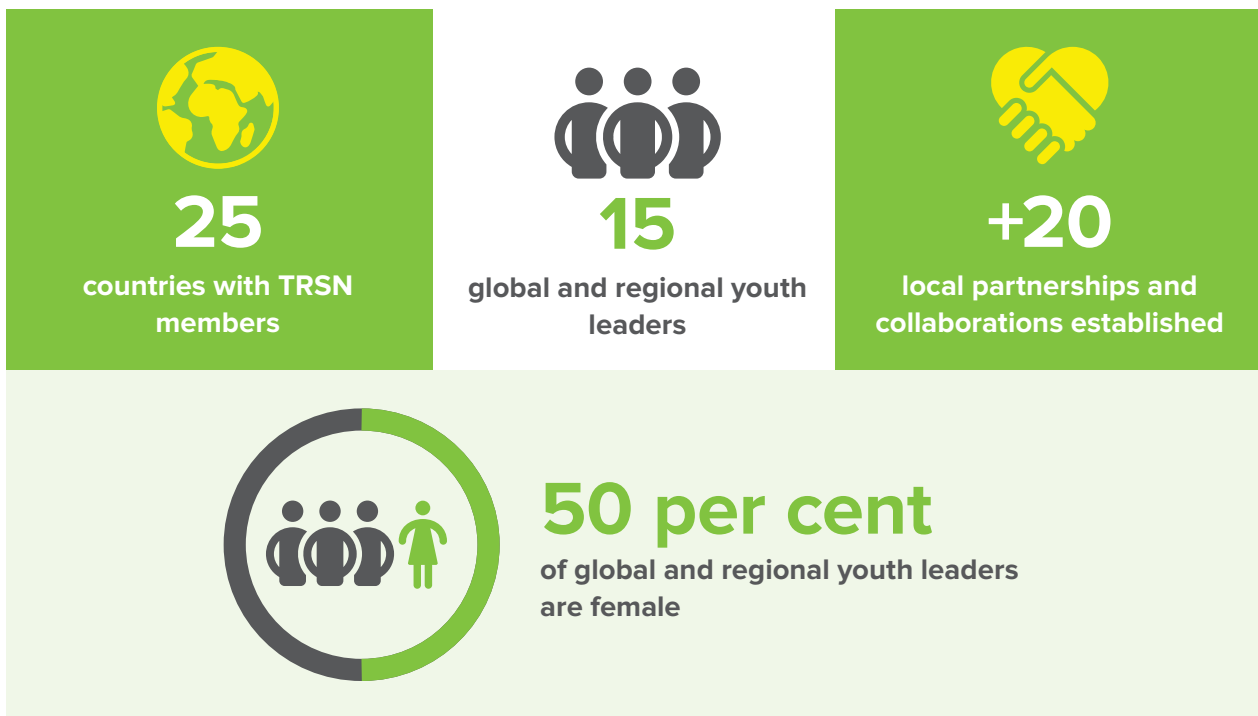


© UNHCR/Kepler student and photographer Samuel Nsabimana – The Tertiary Refugee Student Network met in Kigali Rwanda where they participated in a workshop to strengthen 15by30 transitions to higher education and employment organized by WUSC, MCF, UNHCR and DREEM YAC (November 2022).

According to 2021 data, 6 per cent of young refugee women and men have access to higher education around the world. In 2019, UNHCR and its partners set the goal of increasing enrolment in higher education to 15 per cent among young refugee women and men by 2030 (the “15 by 30” target). As UNHCR continues to work towards 15 per cent enrolment, partnering with refugee student-led networks has played a vital role in advocating for more opportunities in higher education and better inclusion of refugee students in national education systems. UNHCR collaborates with the Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN), a refugee-led platform, on a range of youth and student engagement activities, campaigns, training, and student programmes. TRSN is a network of committed refugee students and graduates who are dedicated to increasing the number of refugee youth with access to higher education worldwide. Many of its global and regional youth leaders have been recipients of the [DAFI scholarship](#).⁴⁶ The network advocates for refugee education at the global and national levels, raising awareness

about the significance of education and empowering fellow refugee youth through skills development, training, workshops and peer support.

The peer-to-peer solutions advisers project is one of the initiatives being piloted in partnership with TRSN. Through this initiative, recent refugee graduates are engaged and trained as advisers and positioned to guide refugee students on potential pathways into tertiary education and employment. Through information-sharing sessions and one-to-one support and guidance, peer advisers share their first-hand experience of the challenges and opportunities affecting refugee youth’s access to education and employment. Using available resources, they prepare refugee secondary students transitioning into higher education and first-year tertiary students seeking guidance on employment pathways. Positioning refugee student leaders as peer advisers and increasing student-led advocacy has been an essential step towards achieving the “15 by 30” target.



46. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “DAFI annual report 2021: NOW is the time”, 2022. Available from www.unhcr.org/633c54084.pdf.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** The TRSN is a self-organized youth structure. TRSN members have been engaged as leaders at each phase of the peer-to-peer solutions advisers project.
- **VALUED:** The initiative considers young people with lived experience as experts.

All peer-to-peer solutions advisers are TRSN network members and receive payment for their work.

- **INFORMATIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE:** TRSN members have participated in steering committees at a strategic level, convening regional planning and problem-solving sessions, as well as liaising and advocating with local authorities and universities throughout project implementation.

2.2. Employment spotlight: livelihoods training for youth in Zambia's Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement

“Providing young refugees with access to formal employment and training through recognition of qualifications, provision of work permits, and through linking them with entrepreneurs and businesses to provide skills training and employment opportunities.”⁴⁷

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Zambia country operation, in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement

FOCUS:

Refugee youth

PARTNERS:

Caritas Czech Republic, a UNHCR-funded partner

YEAR:

2020

47. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.



One
refugee centre was rehabilitated and equipped with computers.



10

elected youth group leaders participated in a five-day “start your own business” training and a 10-day ICT training.



ZMW 25,000
grant (approximate US\$ 1,470) was provided to the group to purchase business materials such as binding and laminating machines and paper cutters.



20

youth joined a cross-country webinar in December 2020 where they had the opportunity to meet youth from other settlements in Zambia to discuss leadership and meaningful participation.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Youth were consulted on their needs and priorities to inform the scope of the initiative. Existing youth groups identified and led their selected livelihood activities.
- AUTONOMY AND SELF-ORGANIZATION:** Engaging with youth groups that were already established, organized and self-driven ensured that youth took ownership of the process and the project.
- SUPPORT:** UNHCR and its funded partner (Caritas Czech Republic) facilitated support for the youth-led initiatives through mobilizing resources and providing the training as detailed.



© UNHCR/Wiseman Lungu – Youth center with livelihoods opportunities in Zambia’s Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement.



© UNHCR/Mediterranean Model UN students in Cyprus – Delegates at the Mediterranean Model UN in Nicosia, Cyprus, celebrate at the end of their Model UN Refugee Challenge debates. They won a Best Model UN Award for their idea to tackle climate displacement.

2.3 Learning spotlight: the Model UN Refugee Challenge

“Supporting learning opportunities that facilitate protection, integration and peacebuilding.”⁴⁸

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Division of External Relations

SCALE:

Global

LOCATION:

80 countries globally

FOCUS:

Young supporters

YEARS:

2020–2022 (to continue in 2023)

48. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

The [Model UN Refugee Challenge](#) encourages students worldwide to tackle issues related to forced displacement during their “Model UN” – a student-led simulation of the work of the United Nations. UNHCR provides students with background guides on key displacement and protection issues before they step into the shoes of a diplomat to debate and discuss key issues and come up with youth-led solutions. Since 2020, students from more than 80 countries have taken part in the Model UN Refugee Challenge. Supported by UNHCR staff and refugees who attend Model UN Refugee Challenge conferences as guest speakers, over 250,000 students have learned about forced displacement with their peers.

Debate topics have included climate displacement, refugees’ economic inclusion, the rights of refugee women, and ending statelessness. In 2021, middle-school, high-school and university students taking part in the Open Eye Model UN in the United Arab Emirates proposed for countries to create national minimum wages to ensure that refugees are paid the same as citizens. Students from the Inventure Model UN in India developed a resolution encouraging authorities to create refugee-friendly health systems and improve health education in both refugee and host communities to reduce vaccine hesitancy.⁴⁹ In 2020, the winning ideas were shared with policymakers during the High Commissioner’s Dialogue. In 2021, the winning ideas were turned into LEGO scenes and displayed during UNHCR policy events.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Students select the Model UN Refugee debate topics. They organize their individual conferences, lead the debate and draft resolutions. They also create content on their websites and social media platforms to promote the Model UN Refugee Challenge and raise awareness about forced displacement.
- YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** The material provided by UNHCR is youth-friendly; background guides and learning support materials are developed to be jargon-free and accessible to young people.
- AUTONOMY AND SELF-ORGANIZATION:** Model UN Refugee Challenges are student-led, with limited supervision from teachers. Participating youth have the autonomy to organize and facilitate the Model UN Refugee Challenge independently.

49. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Brick by brick: Students’ policy ideas to help refugees make their way to the real UN”, April 2022. Available from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/brick-brick-students-policy-ideas-help-refugees-make-their-way-real-un>.

Box 7:**Five lessons learned from the selected project spotlights**

1. **Prioritizing the voices of young people with lived experience** as experts effectively contributes to policy conversations and local action on education and livelihood opportunities.
2. Supporting existing **youth-led initiatives** contributes to the long-term **sustainability and success** of projects and serves to strengthen self-reliance. Involving youth in designing and proposing their own livelihood projects **promotes ownership**. However, a context analysis must be conducted in parallel to review legal frameworks, rights to access employment, and market viability to ensure the youth groups engaged are likely to have the opportunity to carry out their ideas and make a profit.
3. Working in **partnership with refugee-led networks** mobilizes support for the project but additional **capacity strengthening** is required so that youth-led networks can become established and independent entities with the ability to access funding opportunities.
4. **Peer-to-peer mentoring and exchange** have proven to be successful models to support young people in situations of forced displacement to connect with scholarship opportunities, work and internship placements. They have also served to build connections between youth in situations of forced displacement and host community youth.
5. Interactive **learning activities** can engage global youth to **learn about forced displacement and statelessness** and become **advocates and allies** with young people experiencing displacement. Tapping into **existing youth spaces** where young people are engaged is particularly effective and can facilitate increased connections between displaced youth and local students.

CORE ACTION 3:

Ensure refugee youth-focused protection

“Humanitarian actors must engage young refugees in protecting themselves and their peers and ensure that young refugees have access to personal documentation, freedom of movement, and protective services that are attuned to their needs and ensure their safety.”⁵⁰

Young people in situations of forced displacement have first-hand experience of a variety of protection challenges. They are therefore well-positioned to identify their needs, develop proposals for solutions and inspire other stakeholders to take action. By supporting youth-led protection initiatives, UNHCR seeks to ensure that its protection interventions, services and programmes are appropriate and relevant to the diverse needs and capacities of youth within their individual contexts.

Core Action 3 has involved engaging youth in situations of forced displacement as active protection actors. Initiatives that have supported youth to advocate for and claim their rights as well as initiatives that have involved them in delivering humanitarian assistance have been foundational in generating protection outcomes. From youth peer-to-peer education projects to youth-led advocacy for personal documentation, youth have demonstrated their agency and leadership as essential partners in protection responses. Targeted programmes that have engaged youth such as survivors of gender-based violence, LGBTIQ+ youth, youth with disabilities and youth from social, ethnic and religious minorities – have helped ensure that young people are included in mitigating and responding to protection risks.

Each of the spotlights selected demonstrates a promising practice that has helped youth to access and claim their **rights**, contribute to protection efforts, advocate for civil status **documentation** and engage in peer-to-peer **outreach** activities.

3.1 Documentation spotlight: stateless youth-led advocacy in the Dominican Republic

“Ensuring that young people are able to secure personal documentation that enables them to access services, move freely, and have personal security.”⁵¹

50. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

51. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Dominican Republic country operation, in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for the Americas and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

National

LOCATION:

Dominican Republic

FOCUS:

Youth at risk of and experiencing statelessness

PARTNERS:

Caribbean Migration and Development Observatory (OBMICA)

YEAR:

2022 (to be continued in 2023)

DONOR:

United States Government (part of PRM contribution for children and youth 2022)



© Globalizateradio – Dominican Republic. World Refugee Day celebration.

In 2010, the Dominican Republic adopted a new Constitution. This introduced a restriction to the automatic acquisition of Dominican nationality for those born in the country to foreign parents who, at the time of birth, resided irregularly on Dominican territory. In September 2013, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling (Ruling 168-13) which collectively and retroactively revoked the nationality of those born in the Dominican Republic since the year 1929 to parents with a “non-resident” or irregular immigration status at the time of their birth. Most of the population impacted by this ruling were young Dominicans of Haitian descent, who started to face restrictions to their freedom of movement and opportunities for self-reliance. In May 2014, seeking to mitigate the impact of this Constitutional Court ruling, the Executive Branch promoted the adoption of Law 169-14. Although this law stipulated concessions, its implementation to date is considered to be limited.

In partnership with OBMICA, UNHCR has improved the advocacy skills of a group of selected youth through “media tours” and meetings with media professionals. To prepare for the media tours, around 40 young Dominicans of Haitian descent and experiencing statelessness participated in a series of workshops on strategic communication for advocacy, to develop their skills on topics such as the legal framework for nationality acquisition, access

to personal documentation, their right to access basic services, and principles of non-discrimination. After completing the training, youth groups participated in a youth-led media tour. Through engaging with the media (newspapers, social media) and interacting with public opinion leaders, youth improved their capacity to advocate on the issue of statelessness and obtain expert advice on how to frame their public advocacy messages.

As a result, a group of these youth, including the GYAC member from the Dominican Republic, were featured in an article in a national newspaper, *Periódico Hoy*, advocating on the role of youth in bringing attention to marginalization, discrimination and the importance of access to rights. Young people also participated in advocacy interventions and in coordination meetings with other local organizations ([Dominican@por Derecho](#) [Dominicans by Right]). The project has amplified the voices of youth directly experiencing or at risk of experiencing statelessness. The initiative has so far been effective in supporting young people to raise awareness about the challenges involved in obtaining legal documentation and the implications of this situation of disenfranchisement in claiming basic human rights such as nationality, access to national social protection systems, access to public health and education services, as well as access to formal employment.



40

youth engaged and trained



Advocacy opportunities included:

two newspaper publications, one public demonstration, one national platform dialogue, advocacy meeting with ambassadors and United Nations representatives.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Youth led the media tour, advocating across several platforms (news, national coordination meetings), and were consulted during the project evaluation, in which they gave their ideas for further activities.
- **SAFETY:** During project implementation, participating youth highlighted the need for group psychosocial support to manage the protracted distress encountered because of their barriers in accessing rights. A psychosocial support session was held to meet this request in 2022, with further support planned for 2023.
- **AGENCY:** Young people were supported through group mentoring, peer-to-peer exchanges and capacity strengthening workshops to equip them with the capacities and tools needed to act and influence public opinion on the protection situation of youth experiencing and at risk of statelessness.

3.2 Outreach spotlight: youth-led radio programmes and discussions tackling gender-based violence in Malawi

“Enabling peer-to-peer gender-based violence (GBV) education and outreach to survivors of gender-based violence to help them seek support and services.”

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Malawi country operation, in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

Dzaleka refugee camp, Malawi

FOCUS:

Refugee youth

PARTNERS:

Plan International Malawi

YEARS:

2020–2022

DONOR:

United States Government (part of PRM contribution for children and youth 2022)



© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy – Malawi. Pandemic disrupts young refugees' studies in Dzaleka camp.

Malawi currently hosts around 56,300 refugees, largely from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, in order of displaced population size by nationality in Malawi. Most of these refugees live in the Dzaleka refugee camp, where youth account for nearly a quarter of the population. Youth living in the camp have limited access to safe spaces and education opportunities. Young female refugees often experience increased protection risks and are at greater risk of harmful coping strategies such as child labour, early marriage and the sale and exchange of sex. With a view to engaging youth in their own protection and amplifying their voices in the community, a youth advisory panel was established. Successive GYAC delegates from Malawi have played an active role in the youth advisory panel, supporting a number of GBV initiatives.

Established in 2018, the Yetu Community Radio was set up to enable information-sharing and enhance development activities in the camp. In 2020, with support from the

GYAC member, a youth- and women-led radio programme was introduced. This radio programme created opportunities for youth and youth networks to engage in an open dialogue on GBV in the community. Young people utilized the radio as a platform to address problems affecting them, including gender equality, social norms and the risks of GBV. The community radio was supported with technical equipment. After this was installed, the radio station attracted advertising sponsors and is now generating its own income.

Continuing the conversation on GBV in the community, youth leaders and the GYAC member supported the Guard Talks initiative. The Guard Talks provide a platform for girls and young women who are in or out of school to share experiences and access information on sexual and reproductive health in a safe space. The young women discuss life skills that support them to stay safe and explore topics such as staying in school, early marriage and peer pressure.



17

new radio programmes in multiple languages including English, Chichewa, French, Kinyarwanda and Swahili.

Topics addressed on the radio show include: GBV, health, current affairs and COVID-19.



540

girls and young women participated in the Guard Talks.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** The GYAC delegates from Malawi were directly involved in developing the youth-led radio programme in agreement with the radio station management. They also supported the delivery of the Guard Talk series, enabling collaborative participation in the design and implementation of both initiatives.
- VALUE:** The youth-led radio programme and Guard Talk series empowered and valued the role of youth in their own protection by enabling them to express their views and ideas freely and amplify their voices in the community.
- SUPPORT:** The provision of technical equipment supported youth to build their own capacities through the youth-led radio programme.

3.3 Security spotlight: place-based protection and youth-network-led advocacy in Honduras

“Supporting young people as active protection actors, including by involving them in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the promotion of protection for youth.”

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Honduras country operation, in cooperation with the Regional Bureau for the Americas and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

National

LOCATION:

Honduras

FOCUS:

Youth at risk of and experiencing internal displacement

PARTNERS:

Jóvenes Contra la Violencia [Youth Against Violence], whose director was awarded the [Regional UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award 2021](#)

YEARS:

2020–2022

SUPPORTED BY:

United States Government (part of PRM contribution for children and youth)



© UNHCR/Jóvenes Contra La Violencia – “Less weapons, less violence, more education” Young people in advocacy actions.

Honduras is characterized by a situation of protracted internal displacement caused primarily by organized crime and law enforcement operations. The Government officially recognized the situation of forced displacement in 2013. Since then, human rights violations and widespread violence in urban settings have continued, forcing many young people and their families to leave their homes. Jóvenes Contra la

Violencia is an organization led by young leaders from communities affected by violence and displacement. Awarded the UNHCR NGO Innovation Award 2020, its director Santiago Ávila began working with young “ambassadors” to counteract forced recruitment to armed groups and gangs by creating community-based protection initiatives.



© UNHCR/Jóvenes Contra La Violencia – 43% of internally displaced persons in Honduras are children.

With technical support from UNHCR, Jóvenes Contra la Violencia has designed and implemented a range of community initiatives. Innovative community-based initiatives, such as Pégale a la Violencia un Sticker (translated as “Put a Sticker on the Violence”) and Decorando Mi Barrio (translated as “Decorating My Neighbourhood”), have reclaimed public spaces with recreational, art and cultural activities, successfully removing invisible boundaries and territorial restrictions. The initiatives have reduced risks of forced recruitment and increased community protection spaces.

Alongside the Centro de Desarrollo Humano [Centre for Human Development], which is

another youth-led organization, Jóvenes Contra la Violencia was also crucial in advocating for the urgent adoption of a national protection bill for persons in situations of internal displacement throughout 2022. Through community-based awareness campaigns and establishing a youth and civil society participation platform within the Migration and Human Rights Commission of the National Congress, the youth organizations have led discussions on the urgency of an IDP legal protection framework. As a result of their advocacy activities, congresspersons have expressed support for the approval of a comprehensive law to respond to internal displacement.

450



volunteers engaged with Jóvenes Contra la Violencia's community actions and advocacy activities.

200



participants from affected communities engaged in a rapid socioeconomic and psychosocial study during the COVID-19 pandemic led by Jóvenes Contra la Violencia with technical support from UNHCR Honduras.



One meeting

was led by Jóvenes Contra la Violencia and partners with the Migration and Human Rights Commission of the National Congress and civil society organizations to discuss the adoption of an emergency programme to assist IDPs and its relation to the IDP Protection Bill.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Jóvenes Contra la Violencia is a youth-led organization promoting youth-led initiatives in communities affected by urban displacement.
- YOUTH AGENCY AND AUTONOMY:** The organization leads its own initiatives, partnering with UNHCR to receive technical assistance and deliver joint advocacy efforts.
- VALUE:** The advocacy efforts undertaken by Jóvenes Contra la Violencia have created specific mechanisms through which youth have been supported to engage in community-based protection and national-level advocacy.

Box 8:

Five lessons learned from the selected project spotlights

- Youth-led initiatives work effectively to **engage young people in advancing their own protection** and amplify their voices. Young people in situations of forced displacement demonstrate the potential and capacity to lead their own initiatives. Youth initiatives can become **independent and sustainable** with the provision of technical support and guidance.
- Engaging with youth-led organizations** contributes to a deeper understanding of the **context and the specific causes of forced displacement** and may create opportunities for community-oriented prevention of displacement.
- Extending advocacy and communication on legal topics such as civil documentation or nationality laws, and including **the direct and personal experiences of young people**, has proven to be **effective in mobilizing support** towards legal reform, thereby benefiting youth experiencing internal displacement and statelessness.

4. Young people engaged in advocacy opportunities are regularly asked to discuss their experiences of forced displacement. This can contribute to heightened emotions and feelings of frustration and anger. To become effective agents of change, youth need to have **access to mental health and psychosocial support** to help them cope with related distress and strengthen their resilience.
5. Working in **partnership with community** platforms and partners contributes to building trust and respect within communities. Engaging with community partners throughout **all phases of design and implementation** contributes to project success and sustainability.



© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard – Honduras. High Commissioner visits groups tackling forced displacement in San Pedro Sula.

CORE ACTION 4:

Support the physical and emotional well-being of refugee youth

“Humanitarian actors must support young refugees to access opportunities, services and activities that support their mental, emotional, and physical health and happiness and enhance their ability to engage and develop physically, spiritually, and emotionally with their peers, family, and community.”⁵²

In addition to supporting psychosocial well-being, recreational activities such as art, sport and peer-to-peer exchange provide space for interaction, expression and creativity. In addition to strengthening key life skills, these

activities contribute to supporting youth and their communities to develop resilience. They are also effective platforms for youth to raise awareness among other members of their community around protection risks. When utilized across global youth engagement initiatives, these approaches can be effective in demonstrating solidarity with youth in situations of forced displacement.

Each spotlight mentioned highlights promising practices that have contributed to widening **access** and promoting health and well-being opportunities for youth. Furthermore, they demonstrate the power of **recreational** activities in promoting **involvement** and inclusion of youth in situations of forced displacement within host communities for increased social cohesion.

4.1 Access spotlight: facilitators of youth communities and school sports

“Enabling refugee youth to participate in protective sports and other physical and/or recreational activities both inside and outside the classroom.”

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Division of Resilience and Solutions (in close collaboration with the Division of External Relations) with support from regional bureaux and country operations

SCALE:

Regional and global

52. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

LOCATIONS:

Chad, Kenya (Kakuma), Rwanda and Uganda

FOCUS:

Primary school teachers and youth from refugee and host communities

PARTNERS:

Jesuit Worldwide Learning, Save the Children and Plan International

YEARS:

2020–2022

Sport can play a key role in engaging children and youth from both displaced and host communities in addressing protection risks and responding to social and developmental needs. It contributes to increased education opportunities, social inclusion and social

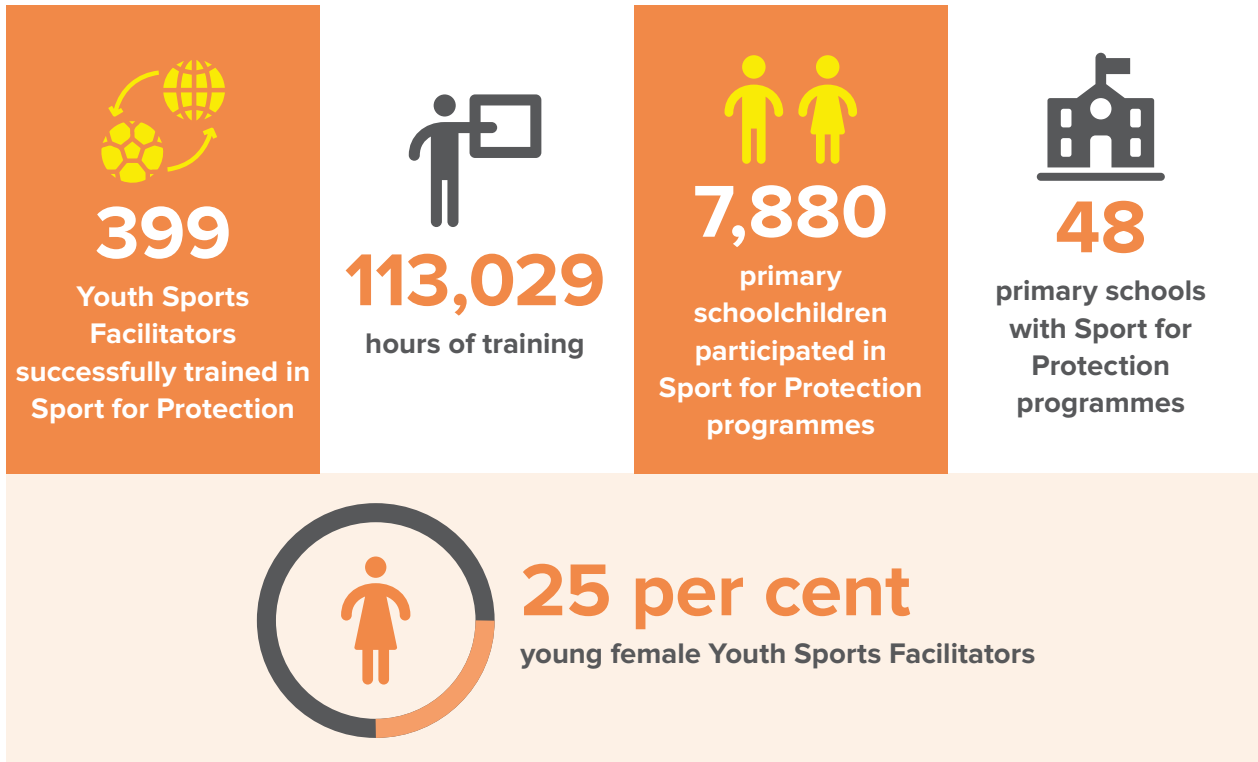
cohesion. Recognizing youth as assets and actors in protecting themselves and their communities, the joint Sport for Protection initiative of UNHCR and Educate A Child (EAC) trained youth and primary school teachers from both refugee and host communities as Youth Sports Facilitators.



© UNHCR/Jesuit Refugee Service/Irene Galera – Chad. Primary school children participate in the Sports for Protection project.

In partnership with Jesuit Worldwide Learning, UNHCR has developed a blended learning programme to train and equip Youth Sports Facilitators with the knowledge, tools and skills necessary to design and implement Sport for Protection activities with children in their local primary schools and communities. In 2021, youth and primary school teachers from Chad, Kenya (Kakuma), Rwanda and Uganda engaged in a blended learning programme in which they participated in online and in-person sessions on protection, conflict management, psychosocial first aid and building cross-cultural relationships. Using the UNHCR/IOC Sport for Protection

Toolkit,⁵³ Youth Sports Facilitators applied what they had learned through 80 hours of supervised and practical activities involving children in their communities. Activities led by Youth Sports Facilitators included football and volleyball. Female Youth Sports Facilitators played an essential role in encouraging and enabling young women and girls to access and take part in the activities offered. Upon completion of the programme, Youth Sports Facilitators received a certificate from the Metropolitan State University of Denver and the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in recognition of their achievements.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Young trainees had the opportunity to design and implement Sport for Protection programmes and **contribute** to the

development of training resources. Certified Youth Sports Facilitators now **lead** Sport for Protection programmes in their local communities and primary schools.

- **YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** Training methodologies, mechanisms and

53. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Terre des hommes organisation (Tdh), "Sport for protection toolkit: programming with young people in forced displacement settings", 2018. Available from: www.unhcr.org/publications/manuals/5d35a7bc4/sport-for-protection-toolkit.html.

resources were adapted to ensure they were youth-friendly, age-appropriate and accessible. Youth were equipped with skills such as project management and leadership to access further opportunities, either for employment or to design and establish their own initiatives while also leading protection initiatives in their communities.

- **SAFE:** Through facilitating Sport for Protection activities both inside and outside the classroom, Youth Sports Facilitators actively promoted the psychosocial health of their younger peers, helping them to develop and improve their physical well-being as well as life skills such as self-confidence, self-sufficiency and decision-making.



© UNHCR/Jesuit Refugee Service/Irene Galera– Chad. Primary school children participate in the Sports for Protection project.

4.2 Involvement spotlight: refugee youth support social cohesion in France

“Working to develop an understanding of challenges facing young people in situations of forced displacement within communities.”

INITIATIVE LED BY:
UNHCR France
SCALE:
National
LOCATIONS:
France and Monaco
FOCUS:
Refugee and host community youth
PARTNERS:
Led by UNHCR and refugee volunteers and implemented in close collaboration with local authorities, stakeholders in education, local associations, refugee workers and educational teams of participating establishments
YEARS:
2020–2022

While forced displacement is often in the French news, teachers are often unable to answer students’ questions on this topic. INTER’ACT was created to give young refugees the role of raising awareness of forced displacement within their host societies. By leading one-day participatory workshops in middle and high schools, young volunteer refugees shared their unique experiences of forced displacement as well as a personal skill or passion with students.

Volunteers led creative music and art sessions and cooked food from their home

countries for lunch in school canteens. In addition to emphasizing common values and experiences, the project also enabled intercultural dialogue as a source of mutual enrichment. During the workshop, young refugee volunteers were able to develop skills, build networks and gain confidence while becoming actors in the society of their host country. Meanwhile, young people in host communities were able to develop knowledge and awareness of forced displacement and feel encouraged to act, hereby increasing social cohesion.



Eight
refugee volunteers under
30 involved since 2020



Six
focus groups run to shape
INTER’ACT with refugee
youth volunteers



7,857
students impacted since
2020

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** From the very start of the project, young refugees **contributed** by developing project activities, facilitating workshops, participating in conferences and covering UNHCR's social networks at school events.
- **YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** Workshops were youth-friendly and provided students with age-appropriate information and resources on forced displacement.
- **INCLUSIVE:** The project took an active approach to including refugee volunteers of all origins and backgrounds, with a focus on encouraging participation from refugee women, giving them the opportunity to connect with a wide range of actors and enabling their socioeconomic inclusion. The project financially compensated youth volunteers for their participation.

4.3 Recreation spotlight: creative arts in Zimbabwe's Tongogara refugee camp

“Creating dedicated safe, welcoming, and enabling spaces for youth to make friends and find peer support.”⁵⁴



© UNHCR/Evode Hakizimana – Representatives from the GYAC Zimbabwe Team, youth-led structures and youth leaders participating in a teambuilding and youth leadership symposium.

54. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Zimbabwe country operation in collaboration with the Regional Bureau of Southern Africa and the Division of International Protection

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

Tongogara refugee camp, Zimbabwe

FOCUS:

Refugee youth

YEAR:

2022

SUPPORTED BY:

United States Government (part of PRM contribution for children and youth 2022)

Zimbabwe hosts approximately 23,000 refugees, most of whom reside in Tongogara refugee camp. Youth and adolescents account for nearly 35 per cent of the refugees in the camp. In response to a lack of opportunities for professional development and support for emotional well-being, a youth-led talent survey targeting 300 adolescents and youth was conducted in February 2022. This survey found theatre and performing arts, alongside music, film making, dance and choreography, to be the most popular forms of expression among youth in Tongogara.

Based on the insights from this research, a creative youth programme focused on

theatre and performing arts was established in addition to mentoring sessions for adolescents and youth who were active in the camp. A youth-led creative committee set up to promote community ownership and effective coordination enabled youth participants to actively shape programmes and assume meaningful leadership roles. As part of the initiative, musical instruments and multimedia equipment were purchased to strengthen the creative and interactive environment for youth, and music festivals were held to showcase their creative work. Funding was also made available for selected young people to study for national professional music certifications.



300

adolescents and youth responded to surveys.



31

(14 female and 17 male) representatives from youth-led initiatives participated in leadership and team-building symposiums.



Three

young people received financial support from the operation to study and obtain national professional music certifications from the Music Crossroads non-profit organization.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION:** Young people took on the roles of active partners, participating in project design, implementation and monitoring. Participatory feedback was collected from sessions and all programme interventions were reviewed to ensure that the initiative considered the views of youth at every phase of implementation.
- INCLUSIVE:** The initiative took an active approach to encourage young women and girls to take on roles in the youth creative committee, giving them a platform to freely share their views. The initiative also prioritized engagement of both young male and female mentors, including those with disabilities.
- YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** Awareness campaigns within the project and the creation of youth-friendly spaces increased access to age-appropriate and youth-friendly services for young people in the community.



© UNHCR/Sonia Gonzalez Suarez – Zimbabwe. World Refugee Day 2022. Rwandan dance group performing during World Refugee Day celebrations at Tongogara Refugee Camp.

Box 9:**Five lessons learned from the selected project spotlights**

1. Engaging young people in situations of forced displacement in recreational and sports-related activities has proven successful in supporting their **physical and psychological well-being and mental health**.
2. **Involvement and promotion of youth ownership** allows youth participants to actively shape programmes and assume **meaningful leadership roles**. This ensures that youth-focused initiatives are responsive to the context, needs and interests of the young people whom they seek to engage.
3. Projects utilizing **recreational activities** including art, sport and peer-to-peer exchange have indicated positive trends in several key areas of **youth development** such as creativity, critical thinking, leadership, teamwork and community building. Building on the interests and passions of young people has contributed to the success of these initiatives.
4. Use of **blended learning methodologies** has proved successful in **widening the participation and inclusion** of young people. Connectivity and access must be considered when engaging young people through online platforms. To ensure that young people can engage with online initiatives, Internet hubs can provide access to support young people's participation.
5. The success of programmes lies in establishing **strategic local partnerships** to create a support network for both youth participants and the programme on local and national platforms. In the case of the creative arts programme at Tongogara refugee camp, creative institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local musicians and talent industry experts were essential to the success of this project. As for the INTER'ACT project in France, engagement with schools, national associations and refugee-led organizations was instrumental.

CORE ACTION 5:

Facilitate refugee youth networking and information-sharing

“Humanitarian actors must facilitate two-way sharing of accurate, honest, age-appropriate, and context-specific information with and among young refugees through channels and structures that are easily accessible.”⁵⁵

Supporting youth in situations of forced displacement to network and share information has enabled them to reach out to and connect with others, exchange information, share experiences, build/sustain relationships across communities and offer mutual support. Youth harness innovative ways of using technology, leveraging social media platforms to disseminate and exchange information, and share feedback with humanitarian actors. By actively seeking the input and ideas of youth on how to reach

out to and mobilize other youth as well as the wider community, two-way communication, responses and feedback can be enhanced, and protection issues can be addressed in new and dynamic ways.

Enabling Core Action 5 has served to multiply youth voices and contribute to youth-led advocacy. Facilitating connection and exchange between national, regional and global youth organizations, networks and groups has been instrumental in increasing trust and two-way communication between humanitarian actors and the youth with and for whom they work.

Each spotlight demonstrates a promising practice that has facilitated **exchange** between youth actors, developed **innovative** approaches and **ideas** to connect youth with each other and their communities, and supported youth mobilization and organization.

5.1 Innovation spotlight: youth community reporters lead content communications in Ecuador

“Exploring with youth innovative ways of using technology including social media to disseminate and exchange information.”⁵⁶

55. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

56. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Ecuador country operation in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for the Americas

SCALE:

National

LOCATIONS:

Ambato, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Huaquillas, Ibarra, Latacunga, Machala, Quito, Riobamba

FOCUS:

Youth and adults in refugee, migrant and host communities.

YEARS:

2019–2020

Effective modalities and communication tools are essential to engaging with and disseminating information among all populations served by UNHCR. When used effectively, communication processes can support both individuals and communities in learning about critical issues and accessing their rights. The Redes Comunitarias initiative (translated as “community networks”) is a

network of community reporters who develop and disseminate targeted communication materials across a range of topics and services to communities experiencing displacement. Similarly, Dale Play (translated as “press play”) is a network of YouTubers and influencers utilizing social media platforms to share information on mobility issues, legal topics and services. Communications



© UNHCR/Dale Play – Two members of Dale Play and UNHCR’s High Commissioner Filippo Grandi watch the informative video on social media they produced together about refugees in Ecuador.



© UNHCR/Dale Play – A Colombian youth in Ecuador produces digital content to promote services of a shopping mall as part of the “Experience Day”, activity part of the national meeting 2021, where Dale Play learned professional influencer techniques.

campaigns created by Dale Play have covered diverse topics such as how to validate a foreign diploma in Ecuador and awareness of LGBTIQ+ individuals during Pride month. Both the Dale Play and Redes Comunitarias groups are representative of the communities with whom they connect. As such, they bring together youth and adult refugees and migrants as well as youth and adults from host communities. To support their communications initiatives, UNHCR provides technical support including workshops on community management, video editing and video production.

In addition to identifying topics of interest to communities experiencing displacement, these groups also develop accessible, informative and engaging content to share across social platforms. The inclusion of

young people in multigenerational groups enriches the process and allows new ideas to be brought to the table. Young members share ideas and perspectives on how to reach out to and engage with members of the wider youth population, connecting with them on their preferred social media platforms and complementing UNHCR information channels such as the help.unhcr.org platform. Youth perspectives are listened to and highly valued within these groups, with young members regularly providing training and support to other members of the network. Youth members have demonstrated their key role as protection actors while strengthening their community leadership capacities. The content creation skills they have developed may also enable them to make a living through digital communications in the future.




© UNHCR/Dale Play – Young refugees and migrants who are part of the first generation of Dale Play, receive their certificates of recognition for their 2 years of participation during the national meeting 2021 in the city of Quito, Ecuador.




8/11
members of Dale Play were members of the youth community.



At least **one** young person experiencing displacement took part in each Ecuadorian city where Redes Comunitarias was active.



More than 50 per cent of youth members were young women.



Communication topics

included: access to sexual and reproductive health, access to education and other services, and vaccination and legal information on regularization campaigns.



© UNHCR/Dale Play – During the national workshop organized in Quito in 2022, a group of 20 members of *Redes Comunitarias* participated in a session of music therapy in order to strengthen the group and work on individual and collective emotions.



© UNHCR/Dale Play – During the *Redes Comunitarias* workshop, held in September 2022 in the city of Machala, a radio clip has been recorded, explaining the requisites to access to the migratory regularization process.

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** In both the Dale Play and *Redes Comunitarias* groups,

youth members identified topics of interest to the community and developed content, making active contributions within each network. Since 2020, the first Dale Play cohort has **led and supported** the engagement of new members within

their network. In *Redes Comunitarias*, **young people led** coordination of group activities.

- **SAFE:** Online platforms bring an increased risk of online abuse. As part of the leadership workshop, members of Dale Play undertook training on digital GBV and received psychological support for dealing with negative opinions online.
- **YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** In response to requests made by youth members, methodologies employed in both Dale Play and *Redes Comunitarias* workshops utilized art and creative techniques to engage and build the capacities of youth members.



© UNHCR/Dale Play – In August 2021, the first *Redes Comunitarias* workshop was organized in the coastal city of Esmeraldas, which has been an opportunity to develop videos on social media about different topics of interest to the displaced population.

5.2 Ideas spotlight: Skills and Knowledge for Youth Economic Empowerment in Georgia

“Engaging with youth as substantive actors in collecting and disseminating information related to refugee protection, durable solutions, the protection environment, and services relevant for youth and their communities.”⁵⁷

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Georgia country operations in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for Europe

SCALE:

National

LOCATIONS:

Batumi, Kutaisi, Tbilisi

FOCUS:

Youth in various situations of forced displacement and statelessness and in host communities

PARTNER:

World Vision Georgia

YEARS:

2020–2021

Together with social partner World Vision Georgia, the UNHCR country operation in Georgia began implementing the Community Mobilization and Participation project in 2019. By engaging with young people in different forced displacement settings in Georgia, the project helped them realize their fundamental rights and encouraged their integration with youth in their host communities. In 2021, World Vision introduced the Skills and Knowledge for Youth Economic Empowerment (SKYE) Club methodology. Based on a “skills and knowledge for youth economic opportunities” model, the SKYE Club takes a holistic and integrated approach

to support youth in developing the skills, behaviours and attitudes they need to make a sustainable living and participate constructively in their communities.

The project established four youth clubs per year. Each club engaged youth in situations of forced displacement as well young people from host communities. The youth clubs met each week to identify problems in their communities, brainstorm solutions, and plan and implement community projects. Club members undertook two projects each year. Through delivering these projects, youth participants delved into community

57. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

issues and developed leadership, project management and business skills. In one community project implemented by the Tbilisi SKYE Club, local young people and refugee youth came together to share presentations on the traditions, cultures, cuisines and other characteristic features of their native

countries. In addition to their community projects, club members took part in sessions on various topics such as leadership, active citizenship, entrepreneurship, employment and intercultural dialogue organized by World Vision.



© UNHCR/Abdikadar Muhammad Ali – Breaking stereotypes, cultural exchange between local and refugee youth, Kutaisi, Georgia.



© UNHCR/Abdikadar Muhammad Ali – Cultural evening, community project in Tbilisi, Georgia.



© UNHCR/Sopho Rostiasvili – Searching for cultural diversity, Tbilisi SKYE club study visit in Telavi, Georgia.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Young people were consulted on the design of the youth component of the Community Mobilization and Participation project. Strategic project planning workshops invited and considered the opinions of young people. The SKYE Club also enabled youth-led participation, inviting young people to decide upon and deliver their own youth-led projects.
- YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** The SKYE Club provided a youth-friendly and age-appropriate environment and methodology in which young participants could engage.
- RESPECT:** Youth were actively involved in advocating for youth-led programmes with local stakeholders. In an annual youth forum, young people collectively identified youth needs and interests and shared their recommendations with the local municipal authorities to help inform annual plans and budgets for youth-relevant activities.

5.3 Organize spotlight: Young Champions for Refugees

“Actively seeking youth input and ideas on how to reach out to young people and other community members on important issues.”⁵⁸

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Division of External Relations

SCALE:

Global

LOCATION:

Global

FOCUS:

Young supporters

YEAR:

2022



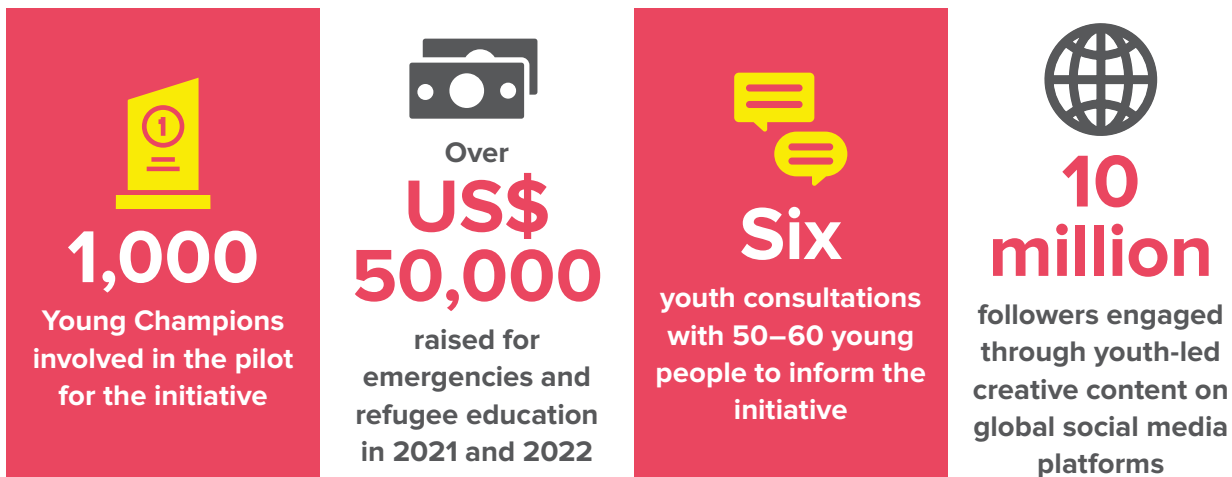
© UNHCR – [Young Champions](#) are invited to take a personality quiz to find out what kind of Young Champion they are: Advocate, Volunteer, Creator or Innovator.

58. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

Young Champions for Refugees is a dynamic community of young supporters and refugees motivated to use their skills to help people forced to flee in their own communities and around the world. In September 2022, UNHCR officially launched its network of Young Champions for Refugees, allowing young people aged 15–25 worldwide to sign up to embark on a journey with UNHCR through which they could volunteer to support refugees by advocating, innovating, fundraising and creating content on social media.

Young Champions were first invited to take a personality quiz before receiving toolkits, newsletters and training. They

were encouraged to take five actions per year, stamping these in a digital action card to receive their official Young Champion Diploma and a Star Award. Before its official launch, UNHCR piloted the Young Champions programme. Approximately 1,000 young people applied to participate in UNHCR youth focus groups. Engaged in fundraising activities, this network raised US\$ 7,000 for refugee scholarships as part of the [Aiming Higher campaign](#) in 2021 and US\$ 32,000 for the Ukraine emergency in 2022. Utilizing TikTok and Instagram videos, as well as a series of letters published on [unhcr.org](#), the Young Champions network has been seen by over 10 million followers with content created to raise awareness of forced displacement.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** Youth were consulted on the design of the Young Champions for Refugees initiative. Insights generated through interactive consultations helped inform key elements of the project.
- YOUTH-FRIENDLY:** Young Champions received training and toolkits developed to be accessible and engaging by UNHCR.
- AUTONOMY AND SELF-ORGANIZATION:** Young Champions were supported to develop their own ideas and initiatives to volunteer, advocate, innovate, fundraise and create content in support of communities experiencing forced displacement.

Box 10:**Five lessons learned from the selected project spotlights**

1. Initiatives that seek to **build relationships and connections** between young people in situations of forced displacement and youth in host communities have benefited from engaging youth leaders from each target community to **mobilize and engage** others together.
2. **Engaging youth in intergenerational groups** and activities, as demonstrated by the Redes Comunitarias and Dale Play initiatives in Ecuador, enriches both the process and outcomes of initiatives. Youth engagement in these groups supports intergenerational exchange and learning.
3. Young people are skilled in communication technologies and are **actively involved in developing and producing dynamic content** and communications materials to engage a wider youth audience.
4. Supporting **continued dialogue** with youth throughout their engagement has served to continuously adapt activities to the needs and interests of participating youth. Allocating **funds for community network projects** has enabled young people to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained through practical activities.
5. Gamifying engagement has proven effective in establishing a **global network of young supporters**. Recognizing participation through rewards helps retain **youth engagement** in such initiatives.

CORE ACTION 6:

Reinforce refugee youth as connectors and peacebuilders

“Humanitarian actors must channel and reinforce young refugees’ abilities to build connections and relationships across social, cultural, linguistic, political, and other differences and support them to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding processes.”⁵⁹

The current generation of youth is more connected than ever before. They play an essential role in building intercommunity and intercultural relationships. Creating opportunities for young people to lead and promote cross-cultural understanding contributes to peaceful coexistence. Through

capacity strengthening initiatives, youth have been supported to become agents for change, leading their own community projects that address negative norms and promote the development of relationships between different ethnic, religious and national communities as well as people of different ages, genders and other characteristics. Through projects, youth have been encouraged to explore innovative ideas and approaches to bridge intergenerational gaps and bring diverse communities together.

Each spotlight demonstrates a promising practice that has engaged with young people as **connectors** to develop new **ideas**, build relationships and help bridge peaceful coexistence.

6.1 Community spotlight: inclusive participation in the Sustainability Committee of Brazil

“Building inter-community and inter-cultural relationships through the use of social, artistic, and cultural skills that enable youth to reach across boundaries between refugees and other communities.”⁶⁰

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Brazil country operation in collaboration with the Regional Bureau for the Americas and the Division of International Protection

59. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

60. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

SCALE:

Local

LOCATION:

Boa Vista, Brazil

FOCUS:

Young refugees and migrant youth

PARTNERS:

Fraternidade Sem Fronteiras (FSF)

YEAR:

2022 (to continue in 2023)

SUPPORTED BY:



United States Government (part of PRM contribution for children and youth 2022)



© UNHCR/Adriana Duarte – Brazil. Venezuelan Refugee Shelter "Rondon 1" in Boa Vista - Roraima.

In Boa Vista in Brazil, UNHCR and [Fraternidade Sem Fronteiras](#) run a sustainability centre close to several shelters of *Operação Acolhida*, the Government of Brazil’s humanitarian response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The shelter hosts young refugees and youth from Indigenous communities. The centre promotes integration between refugees, migrants and the local community through environmental initiatives. In participatory evaluations, youth identified a lack of youth-friendly spaces in which they could have their voices heard and act on community and environmental issues affecting them. As a result of this, the centre established a Youth Sustainability and Environmental Committee to provide a space for youth to come together to develop ideas and activities to reduce local environmental impacts.

Developed with [Fraternidade Sem Fronteiras](#) and the Youth Sustainability and Environmental Committee, workshops on sustainability and climate change have engaged youth groups in environmental awareness campaigns and have promoted community integration between displaced youth and local communities. Youth committee initiatives have enhanced the infrastructure of the sustainability centre. Activities conducted by young people have included learning how to care for a plant nursery, identifying seedlings, caring for aquaponics, and assembling a worm farm. Youth engaged in the project also requested training to improve their knowledge of human rights, how to prevent protection risks, and community work with a view to leading their own environmental initiatives.

 20 young participants	 13 workshops delivered including: Citizenship, leadership and sustainability; My place in the world, who am I, who we are, the world around us; Emotional awareness; Environmental awareness; Voting and participation; Sustainable leadership
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Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** While the sustainability centre itself is an adult-led initiative, young people suggested the creation of a youth committee to promote the inclusion of other adolescents and youth in sustainability activities. Working towards youth-led meetings, the Brazil GYAC delegates contribute their experience and leadership.
- INCLUSIVE:** In addition to engaging young women and men, the initiative has seen the participation of youth from the Warao and Enepa Indigenous communities. This has strengthened it in terms of diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination.
- SUPPORTED:** Youth participants have received needs-based and targeted economic support to ensure their widespread access and inclusion in the initiative’s activities. This has included transportation and monthly economic support for a food basket.

6.2 Connecting spotlight: the Youth with Refugees Art Contest

“Utilizing technology, social media, and other innovative approaches to build far-reaching networks that include people of all ages, ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures.”⁶¹

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Division of External Relations

SCALE:

Global

LOCATION:

100 countries globally

FOCUS:

Young supporters and refugee youth

YEARS:

2020–2021

The [Youth with Refugees Art Contest](#) encourages young people worldwide to use their creativity to support those who have been forced to flee their home countries. In the 2020 and 2021 contests, UNHCR received around 2,000 drawings from contestants in 100 countries. One in three participants were themselves refugees. Previously, UNHCR has partnered with a Japanese anime studio to animate winning illustrations and with Caran d’Ache to offer boxes of pencils to the winners. It has also partnered with an ethical


manufacturer to turn competition designs into footballs sold to support sport programmes for refugees.

In 2020, UNHCR created its first ever digital museum to exhibit the drawings it deemed best, attracting around 30,000 visitors. In the 2021 contest, UNHCR won a Shorty Gold award, raising US\$ 10,000 for refugee sport programmes. A jury including football star Alphonso Davies and actor Kat Graham picked the top submissions each year.

61. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.



© UNHCR/Faida – Faida, a 20-year-old from Rwanda, was one of the Global Winners of UNHCR’s first-ever Youth with Refugees Art Contest in 2020. For her submission, she drew refugees in a camp looking forward to receiving a heart, which symbolizes love.



200
drawings submitted from
100 countries per year



**US\$
10,000**
raised from sales of
footballs



30,000
visitors to UNHCR’s online
museum



One third
refugee participants

Meaningful engagement highlights

- **INCLUSIVE:** The contest was promoted in 12 languages to ensure broad participation. Young refugees were encouraged to participate in drawing sessions and their submissions were scanned.
- **SUPPORTED:** Several young refugees were consequently offered media coverage and featured on UNHCR social media platforms and press releases, resulting in further opportunities for paid work.

6.3 Building spotlight: young South Sudanese mobilizing for peace

“Working with youth as connectors of different ethnic, religious and national communities to promote peacebuilding and peaceful coexistence.”

INITIATIVE LED BY:

Division of International Protection in collaboration with UNHCR country operations and the Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes

SCALE:

Regional

LOCATIONS:

Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda

FOCUS:

South Sudanese refugee and host community youth

PARTNERS:

Implemented by UNHCR in Uganda, South Sudan and Sudan in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council in Kenya and Plan International in Ethiopia

YEARS:

2020–2022

SUPPORTED BY:

The Danish Innovation Fund and the PROSPECTS Partnership



© UNHCR/PIE Tsore Field Team – Sport Tournament and Artistic Show by Refugee and Host Community Youths to Promote Peace Building amongst Youths.

Research conducted with South Sudanese youth in 2019 revealed that this group displayed significantly higher levels of mental and psychosocial distress than other populations. Tension and conflict from their countries of origin spilled over into their countries of asylum, with ethnic identities exploited to perpetuate cycles of conflict and division within refugee-hosting camps and settlements. Recognizing the role of young people as change-makers in and contributors to society and culture, both in their countries of origin and asylum, this programme increased the leadership capacity of youth affected by displacement to become peacebuilders. The programme employed a cascading model of conflict transformation and peacebuilding training. Youth received training on tools to manage conflict among and between their communities. They then became trainers for their peers and communities to equip others with knowledge on and tools for conflict management. Youth peacebuilders rolled out training for community leaders on conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence.

Young peacebuilders mobilize communities for collective action through dialogue sessions, radio, sports, music and drama activities to promote peaceful coexistence. Through conflict mapping, young people identify types and incidences of conflict in the community such as GBV and resource conflict. Collaborating closely with community leaders, local police and other youth in their communities, they share information on referral pathways and available services with members of the community and conduct community dialogues in order to collectively explore these topics. Through this project, young people became part of a network of change-makers across countries of asylum, developing strong relationships across geographical, cultural and gender divides. The programme has improved social cohesion between refugee communities as well as between refugees and their hosting communities, strengthening the agency of youth to work together to find joint solutions.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION:** The programme engaged youth from all countries at all stages of the programme cycle. Youth provided **consultancy** on their needs and priorities. **Collaborative** participation was enabled, with youth co-designing the training curriculum with UNHCR. **Youth led** the identification and implementation of community activities and monthly feedback sessions supported youth in sharing their concerns and suggestions in order to enhance the programme.
- INCLUSIVE:** With only four female youth initially applying for peacebuilding training during the pilot in Uganda in 2020, the programme team took action to encourage female participation. Provision of child-friendly spaces for young mothers during training, engagement of community leaders to cascade information and work carried out with the female youth involved encouraged other young women to participate.
- SAFETY AND WELL-BEING:** The programme's emphasis on skills-building goes hand in hand with addressing the mental health and psychosocial support needs of youth. Youth leaders also received training on mental health and psychosocial support.

Box 11:

Five lessons learned from the selected project spotlights

1. Young people demonstrated their **role as multipliers** by reaching out to other youth and their wider communities to share information, develop skills and promote social cohesion and inclusion. Creative activities are an effective way of mobilizing both young refugees and young supporters.
2. **Engaging youth at every phase of a programme** not only ensures that said programme is responsive to the individual needs and situations of the young people involved, but also that it serves to **strengthen their roles as active citizens** and members of their communities.

3. When working with youth, being mindful of their countries of origin as well as of asylum can help ensure that **engagement tools, languages and methodologies are contextualized** for the specific experience of a social group. This approach also works towards supporting young men and women affected by displacement in (re-)integrating and rebuilding social cohesion upon returning to their country of origin.
4. Training alone does not lead to peaceful societies. **Young peacebuilders need prospects for sustainable futures.** A variety of complementary interventions such as access to sustainable livelihood opportunities that include skills-building through (in)formal education, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational education and training should accompany training and mentorship.
5. Engaging youth in **themed projects and activities** to serve their communities and the environment reinforces their active role in contributing to socially cohesive societies. By participating, young people play an active role in addressing social and environmental challenges while also developing their knowledge and skills.



© UNHCR/G.Opicara – Nuer cultural group prepares for a traditional dance on International Peace Day in Paloryinya, Uganda.

CORE ACTION 7:

Generate data and evidence on refugee youth to promote accountability to youth

“Humanitarian actors must gather quality disaggregated data on youth as well as on their needs, priorities, skills, and contributions; this is essential for planning and designing youth programming and being accountable to youth.”⁶²

The need for data and evidence-based programming for youth in forced displacement settings was reaffirmed in the “IASC guidelines on working with and for youth in humanitarian and protracted crises”.⁶³ While both UNHCR and member States collect data on populations, challenges remain in terms of disaggregating these data by the age group associated with youth. This means evidence-based programming does not always address the potential specific needs of this social group.

UNHCR’s continued commitment to accountability to affected people intrinsically links with Core Action 7.⁶⁴ Building on participatory approaches, youth from diverse backgrounds have been able to meaningfully engage through consultations on protection, assistance and solutions. Feedback and response opportunities have ensured that initiatives are informed by the views of young people in situations of forced displacement on an ongoing basis. The creation of platforms for humanitarian actors to meet and listen to the voices of youth have been integral to achieving this.

This spotlight demonstrates a promising practice that has facilitated **listening** between young people and increased the **transparency and accountability** of UNHCR.

62. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

63. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, “With us & for us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises”, UNICEF and NRC for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, November 2020. Available from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-02/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20Working%20with%20and%20for%20Young%20People%20in%20Humanitarian%20and%20Protracted%20Crises_0.pdf.

64. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Operational guidance on accountability to affected people (AAP)”, September 2020. Available from: www.unhcr.org/handbooks/aap/documents/UNHCR-AAP_Operational_Guidance.pdf.

7.1 Listening spotlight: listening to youth in the High-Level Officials Meeting

“Creating common open spaces for youth and humanitarian actors to meet and listening to their voices to make youth programming relevant.”⁶⁵

INITIATIVE LED BY:

UNHCR Division of International Protection, the Division of Resilience and Solutions and the Division of External Relations

SCALE:

Global

LOCATION:

Global

FOCUS:

All youth in situations of forced displacement

PARTNERS:

Youth-led organizations and networks including the [Global Refugee Youth Network](#), the Tertiary Refugee Student Network, ActionAid Global Platforms, and UNHCR’s GYAC together with the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action

In 2021, the international community came together at the [High-Level Officials Meeting](#) to take stock of progress made since the first Global Refugee Forum. Participants discussed progress, challenges and areas in which further engagement was needed to increase support, self-reliance and access to solutions for refugees and host communities. With a view to strengthening the systemic, meaningful and regular participation of youth affected by forced displacement in the Global Refugee Forum, youth-led organizations and networks came together to coordinate regional youth dialogues.⁶⁶ The dialogues brought together youth affected by forced

displacement from around 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America to discuss, among other things, the challenges youth were facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer suggestions on how to improve their situations and make their participation in consultations, programming, implementation and decision-making more effective.

Engaged youth helped develop a [call to action](#),⁶⁷ a declaration by young people that implores national and international stakeholders at all levels to open space and

65. See www.refworld.org/docid/59dc80184.html.

66. Danish Refugee Council, “We believe in youth! Do you?”, December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs11/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.

67. Danish Refugee Council, “We believe in youth! Do you?”, December 2021. Available from https://pro.drc.ngo/media/ropdhs11/webelieveinyouth_call-to-action_final_web_14122021.pdf.

mobilize resources to facilitate improved participation of youth affected by forced displacement. The call to action put forward eight recommendations on education, employment, documentation and freedom of movement, discrimination, inclusion and social cohesion, access to information and

the Internet, mental health and psychosocial support, and meaningful participation. Youth who took part in the dialogues highlighted their role as agents of change and partners in achieving the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees.



Meaningful engagement highlights

- **DEGREE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION:** Youth-led organizations and structures were engaged to lead the dialogue

process and had specific roles in developing the call to action. The process extended the opportunity to more young people to participate in the consultations where they could share their perspectives and experiences.

Box 12:

Three lessons learned from the selected project spotlight

1. **Organizations, networks and structures led by displaced and stateless youth are essential** partners in fostering meaningful participation and promoting an age, gender and diversity-focused approach in humanitarian work. They are familiar with their communities' needs and priorities and can effectively function as a bridge to bring the voices of displaced and hosting community youth into discussions at various levels on matters that directly affect their lives.
2. **Mutual trust** is critical in establishing **positive collaboration with and among youth and their structures**. Partners should listen and respond to contributions made by youth and their structures to ensure their meaningful participation.
3. It is essential to create **dedicated spaces for youth dialogues in decision-making forums**, and avoid designation and contexts in which youth are made to compete for space against other stakeholders.

3. THE UNHCR GLOBAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

In December 2017, the first GYAC was constituted to further advance UNHCR’s work with and for youth. Initially supported by the Women’s Refugee Commission,⁶⁸ the GYAC is a safe and unique space that enables young people in situations of forced displacement to share their perspectives and bring input from their communities to the work of UNHCR at all levels.

Since 2020, building on its successes as well as lessons learned, the GYAC has undergone a transformative period. By creating an enabling environment, GYAC has supported its members to engage with UNHCR offices, partners and youth networks at the local level while continuing to participate in global policy

dialogue and advocacy activities. This period of transformation has extended opportunities for a more diverse group of young people to participate, including youth in situations of internal displacement and statelessness.

Between 2020 and mid-2022, nine young people were engaged as GYAC members. In 2022, 21 new young delegates were selected to become GYAC members in order to ensure greater diversity and regional representation. They have shared a youth perspective to discussions on refugee policy and have used their voices to represent and amplify the concerns and suggestions of young people and other community members in the following ways:

<p>GYAC members have consulted with their communities to receive broader input on the key challenges for refugees and recommendations for how to address them, using their voices to represent and amplify concerns and suggestions.</p>	<p>In 2022, a GYAC member in Tongogara refugee camp consulted with his community to learn about work related to climate change, co-writing and publishing an article on the UNHCR website. This GYAC member shared his findings with key stakeholders during the annual consultation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Geneva in 2022.</p>
<p>GYAC members have brought a youth perspective to discussions at the local, national, regional and global levels on refugee policy and specific topics and/or themes through interviews, social media, videos, blogs and videos.</p>	<p>In August 2022, a GYAC member from the Dzaleka camp in Malawi attended a District Youth Network meeting organized by the district authorities. Young people from the area came together to vote for a new structure to guide and lead the District Youth Network. The GYAC representative became a member of the Executive Committee, representing Dzaleka youth and the needs of young refugees in dialogue with the authorities.</p>

68. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Women’s Refugee Commission, Global Youth Advisory Council, “Annual report 2018”, December 2018. Available from: www.unhcr.org/5c90f4d84.pdf. Women’s Refugee Commission, Global Youth Advisory Council, “Annual report 2019”, December 2019. Available from: www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/global-youth-advisory-council-2019-annual-report. Women’s Refugee Commission, Global Youth Advisory Council, “Annual report 2020”, April 2021. Available from: www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/global-youth-advisory-council-annual-report-2020/.

<p>GYAC members have reviewed and provided feedback on policies, strategies, guidance documents and training products for UNHCR and its partners and serve on reference groups for research or policy initiatives.</p>	<p>In the second half of 2022, a group of new GYAC members were involved in revising UNHCR's upcoming Child Protection Policy. In November 2022, another representation of GYAC members contributed to a dialogue for the renewal of the PROSPECTS Partnership. In December 2022, GYAC members provided feedback on UNHCR's draft Child Protection Policy.</p>
<p>GYAC members have collaborated with practitioners at the local level to improve services for refugee youth and have supported the development and selection of youth-led projects.</p>	<p>In 2022, a GYAC member was engaged to mobilize and strengthen the capacity of youth to conduct youth-led initiatives in Rwanda. The community-based protection partner Prison Fellowship Rwanda directly contracted this GYAC member, who assisted youth activities in various locations.</p>
<p>GYAC members have spoken on panels at international conferences and meetings and have organized and facilitated sessions that highlight youth perspectives for events.</p>	<p>In July 2022, two GYAC members participated in the side event to the Human Rights Council devoted to "The Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Elections". In 2022, two GYAC members from El Salvador and Malawi shared their experiences of displacement in an interfaith dialogue organized by Arigatou International.</p>



© UNHCR/Mary Sanyu Osire – South Sudan. The youth committee in Doro refugee camp educate their community on COVID-19 through song.

Five lessons learned:

1. **LOCAL ACTION:** The participation of GYAC members in UNHCR country operations has created new opportunities to accelerate UNHCR's agenda on youth protection and participation, and to harness the potential of GYAC members as local protection actors. As a result, there has been stronger institutional support for the GYAC at the national level, and youth-focused community-based protection has become stronger.
2. **GLOBAL ADVOCACY:** Recognizing the importance of regional and local dynamics in global advocacy efforts, online engagement has made it possible to facilitate the meaningful participation of young people all over the world. Beyond the GYAC, the creation of a roster of youth advocates has supported identification and selection of young people with different thematic interests and experiences to speak and share their perspectives on panels at international meetings and conferences.
3. **ENABLING ENVIRONMENT:** Providing structured support to GYAC members to engage in their local country initiatives has been essential in enabling their participation. Approaches to creating a supportive environment have included creating specific volunteer assignments with local operational partners, providing GYAC members with office space and technical support, and providing a volunteer allowance in line with local standards to compensate GYAC members for their time and commitment.
4. **ONGOING SUPPORT:** In addition to being a space for youth networking and peer-to-peer support, the GYAC has also evolved into a place for learning and development. One-to-one mentoring and coaching for GYAC members as well as capacity strengthening opportunities have supported members in developing the knowledge and skills required to meaningfully engage in GYAC activities and the confidence to represent and amplify the voices of other youth. These efforts will continue into 2023 to support newly selected GYAC members.
5. **TRANSPARENCY:** Providing GYAC members with transparent and clear information about their roles and responsibilities has enhanced communication. These include terms of reference with achievable tasks that can be tailored to the regional dynamics and priorities of operations where each GYAC member is based. GYAC members have also been requested to sign a Code of Conduct to commit to ethical behaviours and are requested to undertake UNHCR standard e-learning on the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA).



© UNHCR/Kamrul Hasan – Bangladesh. Young Rohingya refugees champion environmental action in camps.

4. GLOBAL ADVOCACY, INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

UNHCR's continued commitment to collaborating and partnering with other United Nations organizations, States and donors, and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as with representative youth organizations and networks, has been instrumental in advancing UNHCR's work with and for displaced and stateless youth since 2020. These efforts have enabled UNHCR to:

- **exchange and produce knowledge** on working with and for young people in humanitarian settings and protracted crises, with attention to specific situations and needs caused by forced displacement and statelessness;
- **provide services and deliver programmes** that engage youth, not only as beneficiaries, but also as actors and partners in humanitarian and protection work;
- contribute to **technical assistance and the formulation of policy** and guidance that responds to the needs of youth in forced displacement settings;
- engage in collective **advocacy efforts** that seek to put the needs and aspirations of youth in situations of forced displacement on the global agenda.

With UNHCR's considerable progress in recent years, these platforms and partnerships have also provided an essential space for UNHCR to continue to learn about effective practice, design new methodologies and ways of working, and adapt processes as it continues its efforts to work with and for displaced and stateless youth.

Inter-agency platforms, collaboration and partnerships

Inter-agency platforms and partnerships strengthen collective action and facilitate increased collaboration. Through efforts across various UNHCR divisions and entities, UNHCR participates in the following initiatives:

The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action is a commitment by over 50 humanitarian actors to transform humanitarian action with and for young people.⁶⁹ Launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and co-chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the compact has worked with the IASC to produce its guidelines for working with and for young people in humanitarian settings and protracted crises. These guidelines provide a framework for working with and for young people throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.⁷⁰ The guidelines refers to six guiding principles: acknowledging youth as rights holders; promoting meaningful

participation; giving away power to youth; committing to collecting disaggregated data and having youth represented in the humanitarian architecture; promoting equity, non-discrimination and inclusion; and ensuring accountability to youth. As a participating member of the Global Compact, UNHCR has helped develop these guidelines alongside UNICEF and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and continues to mainstream them across its youth-relevant activities. During a recent stocktaking exercise in November 2022 which assessed the structure and various workstreams of the compact, UNHCR agreed to invest increasing efforts in a task force on advocacy, within the context of preparing for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

The Global Coalition on Youth Peace and Security (GCYPS),⁷¹ co-chaired by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) and the United Nations (Peacebuilding Support Office [PBSO] and UNFPA), facilitates coordination and collaboration between more than 70 organizations to strengthen youth participation in peacebuilding policy and practice. UNHCR participates to ensure that its key messages on displaced and stateless youth are included in GCYPS reports and initiatives.

The Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)⁷² is the United Nations' inter-agency mechanism for enhancing the United Nations' work in youth development and policy by strengthening collaboration and coherence between relevant United Nations entities. UNHCR participates as a network member, engaging with agencies to strengthen youth-relevant programmes and policies across the United Nations.

69. See www.youthcompact.org/.

70. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "With us & for us: Working with and for young people in humanitarian and protracted crises", UNICEF and NRC for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, November 2020. Available from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-02/IASC%20Guidelines%20on%20Working%20with%20and%20for%20Young%20People%20in%20Humanitarian%20and%20Protracted%20Crises_0.pdf.

71. See <https://youth4peace.info/node/347>.

72. See www.un.org/development/desa/youth/what-we-do/un-inter-agency-network-on-youth-development.html#:~:text=The%20IANYD%20is%20the%20United,among%20all%20relevant%20UN%20entities.

Youth 2030: United Nations Youth Strategy:⁷³

The United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth led the development of the United Nations Youth Strategy to guide the United Nations in stepping up its work with and for young people across its three pillars – peace and security, human rights, and development – in all contexts. The strategy seeks to strengthen the United Nations' capacity to engage with young people and benefit from their views, insights and ideas, in addition to holding United Nations entities accountable for addressing youth issues. It calls on the United Nations to support youth leadership and build expertise on youth engagement and development as well as mobilizing resources for youth. Since its early involvement in drafting the strategy, UNHCR has continued to provide input to the Global Youth 2030 progress report.

PROSPECTS⁷⁴ Initiated by the Government of the Netherlands and working together with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank,

the partnership works to improve the prospects of persons in situations of forced displacement including youth and host communities in Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, the Sudan and Uganda. Working across three intervention pillars, the partnership aims to: leverage existing agency programmes; provide platforms for mutual learning; strengthen strategic coordination and coherence; optimize resources; and build sustainability on education and training, employment, and livelihoods and protection. In the phase of the PROSPECTS Partnership spanning the years 2020 to 2023, UNHCR has engaged in the initiative devoted to Advancing Young People's Engagement and Meaningful Participation in the PROSPECTS Programme, aimed at empowering youth in situations of forced displacement, particularly the most marginalized among them, to influence learning-to-earning programming, boost youth transitions to decent work, address protection concerns and prioritize issues of concern to youth and their communities.

73. See www.unyouth2030.com/.

74. See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90753>.

5. LOOKING FORWARD

Recommendation 1:

Harness efforts and opportunities for cross-sectoral and inter-divisional collaboration on youth.

Youth activities across UNHCR align with several of the [Strategic Directions](#)⁷⁵ outlined by the High Commissioner in 2017. The diverse portfolio of projects and initiatives selected for this report reflects the cross-sectoral progress that has been made to involve and empower youth and promote their inclusion across several divisions and entities at UNHCR and at multiple levels. From engaging youth as partners in country operations to establishing platforms for global youth-led advocacy, the opportunities to work with and for young people, and the benefits of doing so, are far-reaching.

Supporting holistic youth development and meaningful youth engagement is, by its very nature, intersectoral. Efforts to promote inter-divisional cooperation on youth-focused initiatives must be harnessed to remove siloed working and to mainstream effective youth engagement across UNHCR as a common and integrated effort. Meanwhile, the aspirations and ambitions most expressed by displaced and stateless youth, notably in the areas of education, livelihoods and participation, must be factored into UNHCR programming. As progress continues to be made, opportunities to develop a UNHCR-wide youth agenda through which various divisions contribute within their own capacities should be considered.

Recommendation 2:

Review and update the Core Actions for Refugee Youth in partnership with youth in forced displacement settings.

Since 2016, the Core Actions for Refugee Youth have provided a mutually enforcing framework for working with youth in situations of forced displacement and UNHCR has not only engaged with young refugees through its youth-related work but has also extended its work to young people in different situations of forced displacement. This has included youth in situations of internal displacement, youth experiencing or at risk of statelessness, and young returnees.

The protection risks experienced by these different youth groups are, in some instances, context-specific. During this period, these youth populations have been impacted by COVID-19, as well as the adverse effects of climate change in certain regions. As a result, the Core Actions for Refugee Youth may need to be reviewed and updated to more accurately reflect the current needs and aspirations of young people in all situations of forced displacement. The review process should be delivered in partnership with youth and their structures, ensuring that youth play an active role in identifying their own evolving needs and proposing solutions.

75. See <https://reporting.unhcr.org/strategic-directions-2022-2026>.

Recommendation 3:

Continue to engage in inter-agency coordinated work on youth through the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and through initiatives led by the United Nations and other institutions, drawing on complementary strengths and expertise and promoting the inclusion of displaced and stateless youth in their programmes and initiatives.

The projects showcased in this report demonstrate how displaced and stateless youth can, and do, make substantive contributions to community-based protection initiatives and humanitarian responses that propose interventions and solutions. By respecting the agency of youth and engaging with them in the design and implementation of their own initiatives, as well as initiatives led by UNHCR and its partners, UNHCR works with and for youth as agents of change. Efforts to continue mainstreaming meaningful youth engagement practices through resourcing and capacity strengthening must continue across the organization.

UNHCR has helped develop the IASC Guidelines, which provide a coherent structured framework for working with and for youth in humanitarian settings and protracted crises. UNHCR should continue to engage with its sister United Nations organizations, NGOs and development actors, drawing on their complementary strengths and expertise in youth programming, while promoting UNHCR's principles of inclusion and engagement of youth as a diverse segment of the displaced population, in line with its policy on age, gender and diversity.

Recommendation 4:

Advance the collection and use of disaggregated data and information on displaced and stateless youth to enhance evidence-based programming and advocacy.

Engaging with youth through consultative mechanisms such as participatory methods can generate data and evidence that contribute to developing an understanding of the complex protection risks experienced by displaced and stateless youth, as well as how these risks impact different groups of displaced youth. As UNHCR continues to engage with displaced youth, further progress to collect information and disaggregate data on youth should be made to advance understanding of their situations and specific needs while promoting responsive evidence-based programming. These efforts will also support advocacy efforts to encourage humanitarian and development actors, hosting States and donors to include displaced youth in their plans and interventions. Opportunities to engage with youth in the collection and analysis of data and information, as well as in the dissemination of insights and analysis, should be pursued to enable the meaningful participation of this group.

UNHCR YOUTH REPORT

2020–2022

Working with and for Youth in Situations of Forced
Displacement
