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Youth inclusive guide to peace mediation

A study commissioned by the Greens/EFA International Cluster

A study commissioned by the Greens/EFA to Search for Common Ground

FOREWORD

Seven years after the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, the positive role young people play in building sustainable peace is increasingly acknowledged and promoted. Young people in Europe and around the world, 1,85 billion strong, are slowly taking their rightful place in spaces where solutions to conflicts are being discussed. They are taking active roles as peacebuilders and mediators, both within and outside formal peace processes.

Evidence shows that peace processes that engage and include young people are more likely to be successful. Youth engagement on South Sudan's High Level Revitalization Forum, as described in this guide, provides one example of the diverse ways youth engage in peace processes, and the impact it has. Where youth were largely excluded from the initial 2014 peace talks, youth representatives "in the room" of the Revitalization Forum informed a better approach to disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration action. Meanwhile, "around the room", youth were building alliances with women's movements, feeding their joint priorities into the negotiations, and convincing parties to open space for refugees to speak in the talks. "Outside the room", South Sudanese youth promoted fact-based discussion on the talks through an e-delegate participation platform, which helped feed grassroots perspectives into the negotiations and prevent misinformation and public panic.

The rhetoric on the importance of youth inclusion, however, does not always live up to its promise in practice. In the 900 negotiated peace agreements signed globally in the last couple of decades, the voices of young people have been largely absent. Too often, young people are still an add-on or tick-box exercise in peace processes. The potential they possess is too often hindered by lack of recognition, support, funding, and genuine partnerships.

The European Union has committed to work on changing this. In 2022, the EU celebrated the Year of Youth, during which it adopted its first Youth Action Plan in EU external action. In the Action Plan, the EU commits to actively and inclusively engage young people in efforts to build lasting peace and contribute to justice and

reconciliation, including by developing concrete guidance and capacity building to enhance the youth dimension in peace mediation.

Developed concurrently with the update of the European External Action Service's mediation guidelines and in support of the global 5-Year Strategic Action Plan for Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes launched in January 2022, this guide is intended as a practical resource on the "how" to include youth in peace mediation. With actionable recommendations and inspiring examples of youth-led efforts, we hope it helps those leading and supporting peace processes understand not only the benefits, but also the practical feasibility of meaningful youth inclusion.

Ultimately, in a spirit of partnership and in synergy with other efforts led by young people and their allies around the world, we hope the guide contributes to the imperative of harnessing youth participation, and the capacities of YPS-supporting institutions like the EU, in realising more inclusive and peaceful societies. We are in this together!

Alvina Alametsä, Member of the European Parliament Greens/EFA Co-Chair, EU YPS Coalition
Eoin O'Leary, Policy Officer, Search for Common Ground Co-Chair, EU YPS

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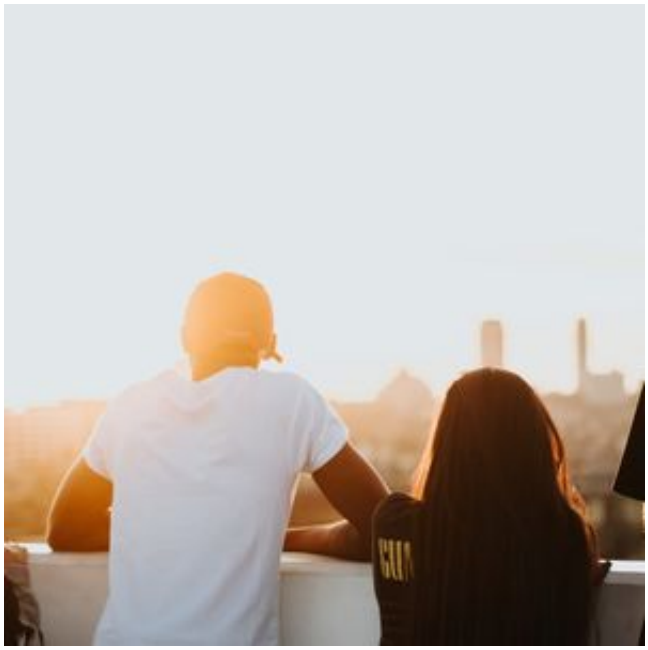


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Responsible MEPs



Alviina Alametsä

Member

Contact person



Juliane Schmidt

Team leader - Rights, Democracy and International Affairs

Attached documents

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