

Position Paper on Youth, Peace and Security



Youth, Peace and Security



World Scouting recognises that peace is essential for justice, dignity, resilient communities, and the full realisation of human rights. Yet ongoing conflicts, political instability, economic uncertainty, and climate-related pressures continue to weaken community cohesion and trust, leaving only a fragile peace. Young people are particularly affected: 123.2 million are displaced, education is disrupted, and insecurity exposes them to exploitation, radicalisation, and human rights violations.

The climate crisis further intersects with peace and security. Environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and biodiversity loss intensify social and political tensions, disproportionately affecting young people whose futures depend on resilient communities and ecosystems. Meanwhile, a shift toward state-centric, military approaches often sidelines human security and peacebuilding, leaving communities without the tools to address conflict constructively or to nurture individual dignity and well-being.

World Scouting rejects the view of young people as merely vulnerable or at risk. Evidence shows that, when empowered through education, safe spaces, and dialogue, they transform conflicts from the roots. Peace can be sustained by intergenerational creativity and engagement.

Developed by, with and for young people – and informed by partners and expertise drawn from across the World Scout Movement – this paper sets out a bold set of calls to action. We invite governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society to centre young people in peacebuilding, providing the policies, resources, and spaces needed to unlock their full potential as architects of a more just, inclusive, and peaceful world.

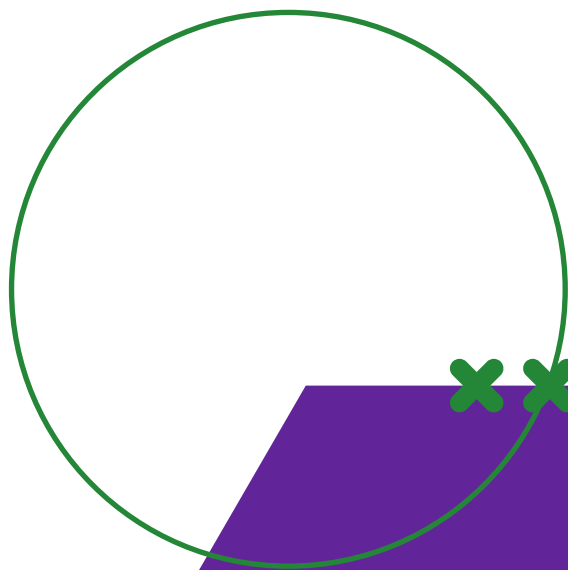




How we understand peace and security

World Scouting affirms that:

- Peace is more than the absence of violence. It encompasses justice, dignity, inclusion, and harmony with others and the environment, within oneself, between individuals, communities, and across borders, as well as with the environment.
- Peace is a continuous process that requires societal investment and commitment at all levels: from personal well-being to social harmony.
- Every young person has the right to grow up in peace and safety.
- Young people are agents of peace today as well as beneficiaries of stability.
- Non-formal education and learning is essential for sustainable peacebuilding and must be recognised for its role in both individual development and collective societal transformation.
- Youth participation must move beyond consultation toward embedded leadership in governance and decision-making at local, national, and transnational levels. Youth engagement that lacks resourcing, protection, or decision-making authority does not meet the standard of meaningful participation.
- Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are non-negotiable pillars of peaceful societies.
- We align with and actively advance the United Nations Youth, Peace and Security agenda, including Security Council Resolutions 2250, 2419, and 2535.



Our rationale



Values-based foundations

The values-based foundations of Scouting, rooted in Baden-Powell's philosophy, are a central pillar of our approach. We believe that peace is fundamentally educational and defined by dignity, justice, and harmony. The principle of interdependence is central to our work, as we understand that peace is not simply the absence of conflict, but the presence of social bonds built on mutual respect and shared responsibility. Civic engagement is at the heart of Scouting, as it builds ownership and endurance within communities. Young people who actively contribute to peace efforts not only reinforce their societies' social fabric but also empower themselves as agents of change.

Evidence of impact

Evidence shows that societies investing in youth education, civic engagement, and inclusive institutions are more resilient during conflict and crisis. In nearly all the 176 National Scout Organizations, peace education is integrated into youth programs, highlighting the transformative impact of non-formal education on peace and social cohesion.

Over the past decade, Scout youth-led initiatives have delivered over 16 million Messengers of Peace projects and nearly 3 billion hours of service through the Scouts for SDGs programme, which has directly impacted SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). These programmes are powerful examples

of the demonstrated impact of youth leadership in building peace and security through advancing dialogue, humanitarian response, and sustainable development. Recognitions such as the UNESCO Peace Education Prize (1981) and a Nobel Peace Prize nomination further validate the essential role of youth in peacebuilding.

World Scouting has established operational credibility through partnerships with global organisations such as UNICEF, European Union, KAICIID, the IFRC, Temasek Foundation, UNESCO, UNFPA and more. Collaboration with mediation and peace experts, combined with support for grassroots initiatives, ensures our work is evidence-based and effective.

World Scouting's commitment to peace and sustainability



As a leading global educational movement, we acknowledge a responsibility to invest in and lead peacebuilding efforts.

Therefore, World Scouting commits to:

- Continuously revise and strengthen peace education methods to meet evolving challenges.
- Embed youth leadership and participation at all levels of peace processes and decision-making. This means ensuring that young people are actively involved in all stages of peacebuilding, from prevention and early warning to conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, institutional capacity building, policy advocacy, and the monitoring and evaluation of peace efforts, with real decision-making power at each operational level.
- Partner with inter-governmental agencies, governments, and civil society organisations to advance the youth, peace and security agenda.
- Advocate for inclusive, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels.
- Support youth-led initiatives with funding, training, and institutional platforms.
- Scouts worldwide are proving that young people are not just beneficiaries of peace, they are its advocates, builders, and sustainers.



Calls to action

To strengthen youth-led peacebuilding, governments, multilateral institutions, and funders should:

- 1 **Shift from reaction to prevention:** Address the root causes of violence in partnership with communities, rather than reacting to crises. Place young people, most affected by conflict, at the centre as principal drivers of systemic change.
- 2 **Tackle insecurity at its roots:** Address economic inequality, lack of education, and exclusion through social programmes that combine dialogue with tangible opportunities, jobs, resources, and empowerment, to reduce incentives for violence.
- 3 **Build peace from society's roots:** Ensure that both formal and non-formal education foster human rights and shared values in families, schools, and communities. This creates the foundations of resilient societies and equips youth to act as changemakers.
- 4 **Make education holistic:** Integrate peace, human rights, sustainability, and global citizenship into learning systems, ensuring young people gain the competencies to navigate interrelated challenges.
- 5 **Recognise non-formal education as essential:** Treat non-formal education as an equal partner to formal education in peacebuilding, acknowledging its role in building critical thinking, dialogue, and life skills.
- 6 **Advance the youth, peace and security agenda:** Sustain and deepen progress on youth participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and reintegration, ensuring young people are sustainably resourced and engaged meaningfully across all stages of peace processes.
- 7 **Invest in youth-led action:** Create accessible funding streams for grassroots and informal youth groups and youth-led peacebuilding organisations, rather than exclusively non-governmental organisations, so they can lead and sustain peacebuilding, reconciliation, and education initiatives in their own communities.
- 8 **Institutionalise youth leadership:** Embed youth voices in governance through advisory boards, quotas, and decision-making roles that move beyond symbolic inclusion.
- 9 **Support youth and education actors in fragile contexts:** Enable non-formal education and youth organisations to operate in conflict-affected areas, providing safe spaces and continuity of learning where formal systems are disrupted, and protect young peacebuilders and activists.
- 10 **Build faith through clarity:** Open accessible channels for youth, marginalised communities, and civil society to voice concerns, making peace institutions more legitimate and responsive.





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