

**Committee:** UNESCO

**Agenda Item:** Developing educational models to enhance youth political participation & engagement in resilience building

**Student Officer:** Beliz Eraydın - President Chair

## Introduction

The contemporary international environment is characterized by intensified volatility, rising geopolitical tensions and especially systematic vulnerabilities to external influence. These are all detrimental to global stability. In this time of change, the role of youth, as the world's largest demographic group who will deal with these challenging issues is considerable. Recent trends in politics and security indicate that vulnerable, often marginalized, youth are simultaneously highly vulnerable to destabilizing forces, and are an underleveraged asset in creating sustainable resilience in communities and nations.

The topic establishes the framework for this report, connecting the need for integrated types of stability in the 21st century with successful youth engagement. The ensuing analysis puts this issue outside of typical civic engagement discussions, and designates it a pivotal aspect of proactive national security policy. This clears the way for a new policy mandate, recognizing that empowerment of global youth is necessary for developing future leaders and policymakers who can identify and provide solutions to complex systematic threats to long term peace.

The report will begin by discussing how young people face systematic barriers to effective engagement in politics and advocacy, then look the state of existing educating and non-formal education opportunities and lastly layout a complete set of model components.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Shortcomings with educational structures:** Legacy civic education tends to rely on upon a passive, didactic approach, emphasizing memorization of governmental structures instead of cultivating essential critical skills that promote active and engaging political participation. Typically, civic learning does not sufficiently emphasize key features, such as the media literacy, systematic power dynamics, or interpersonal skills such as negotiation, consensus building, conflict resolution or collective governance skills. lack of experiential learning associated with resilience projects tied to their communities further disconnects education from utilitarian aims.

**Socioeconomic contexts:** Youth from marginalized backgrounds or youth affected by conflict face diverse external barriers limited access to economic opportunities, high rates of unemployment(which may very significantly), and cultural norms or practices that limit the autonomy of young people's ability to plan or develop a long term engagement strategy or engagement efforts focused on resilience. Moreover, the digital divide extends across the globe, which means that significant numbers of young people do not have access to the key platforms to mobilize politically or share information with others, this exacerbates existing inequalities in political power.

## Major Actors Involved

**USA:** Advocacy for Global Citizenship and Democracy: Because of their deep concern for youth engagement with the democratic process and civil society, which they conceptualize almost exclusively in terms of democratic ideas and freedom of expression. The disinformation threat and the threat posed by authoritarian forces is also a huge concern for them, because the youth engagement on this issue seems very critical for the prevention of extremism. Also the commitment to ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) and structural youth involvement.

**Germany:** Strong commitment to ESD and youth participation: This candidate is a strong believer that youth participation should not only happen because it is their right, but because it is also a necessity and a form of pioneering for the formulation of policies. They also give a high level of importance to Education for Sustainable Development on the UNESCO platform.

**France:** Participation in the Context of Fragile State and Occupation: The participation of youth is distinguished by specific circumstances, including the consequences of fragmentation, the absence of formal channels for accountability, and the existence of economic barriers. It is often carried out through non-formal channels.

**South Korea:** Contemporary Electoral and Legislation Reforms: These are driven by the need to respond to the issue of youth apathy and representation, often coinciding with the context of high academic pressure and socioeconomic challenges. The reforms are centred on legislative reforms, specifically lowering the voting age, and boosting political awareness, though the gap between the latter and participation persists.

**India:** Leveraging the Demographic Dividend for Nation Building: Considers the large number of youth they have as a major strength (demographic dividend) for the development of the nation, advancement of technology, and the overall stability of the nation. Programs usually involve engaging with the political process, social service, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of national narratives.

**Nigeria:** Building Resilience Against Conflict and Vulnerability: Empowers youth against unemployment, poor educational standards, and exposure to violence, crime, and extremism. The collaboration between the organization and the United Nations is essential for the formulation of strategies on building peace and preventing gender-based violence.

**Palestine:** Participation & the Context of Fragile Governance & Occupation: The youth participation is distinguished by specific circumstances, which include the challenges of fragmentation, the lack of participation space, and the obstacles of economic mobility. The youth participation is performed using the non-formal participation approach.

## General Overview of the Issue

In the contemporary international environment, characterized by a high level of uncertainty and a fragile system, it becomes apparent that the time is ripe for a reevaluation of how societies approach the issue of building resilience on a long-term basis. Here, the crux of the matter lies with the demographic group that, current estimates reveal, comprises the single largest proportion of the worldwide population: youth. The topic for discussion, “Developing educational models for the enhancement of youth political engagement and participation for resilience building,” begins with the premise that not only is the current engagement of youth a question of building civic duty but also that it is the essential building block of proactive national security and democratic pillars policies. This discussion will argue that the only effective means of addressing this issue lies not within the current patterns of engagement, which are at best merely tokenistic, but rather in the development of comprehensive systems of engagement.

This continuing problem can also be seen to be the result of an epistemology of exclusion, whereby the political apparatus simply emphasizes the maintenance of order over the balanced allocation of control. This trajectory is one that contains two major points of failure:

**Institutional Inertia and the Tokenism Trap:** While the previous efforts, especially the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, “Youth, Peace, and Security,” provided the normative framework for youth engagement, their execution was thwarted by the absence of political will and

institutional fear of loss of control. As a result, states, operating in their designated “Zone of Influence,” circumscribed youth engagement efforts into tokenistic consultative mechanisms, thus creating a cycle of disenchantment. This trust gap, the feeling of disenfranchisement, of willful disregard for participation, is the very weakness. This disenchantment causes the disenfranchised youth, positioned on the periphery of economic unrest, to gravitate toward disruptive actors (extremism, crime), who provide them with their own definition of justice and meaning.

Secondly, the Mechanistic Fallacy in Civic Education: The current curriculum suffers from the Mechanistic Fallacy, which stems from the misconception that learning about the political system will necessarily guide their political activity. This approach ignores the fact that there are various political, economic, and social barriers that affect the lives of youth, foremost among which is the prevalence of youth unemployment. By ignoring the fact that youth suffer from socio-economic exclusion, the theory of education ignores the societal factors that hinder political participation, hence cultivating a sense of political disenfranchisement. It also appears that the current curriculum ignores the fact that there has been efficacious growth in the alternative form of political engagement, specifically issue-based political engagement on the Internet.

## Timeline of Important Events

Date:	Event:
2014	UNESCO Operation Strategy of Youth
2015	Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs), particularly SDG 4: Quality education SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions
2015	UN Security Council's Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)
2024	Launch of the UNESCO Futures of Education initiative (Focus on re-thinking how knowledge and learning can shape the future, Participation of youth a central theme).  Global Summit on Digital Literacy & Misinformation (An international initiative, often undertaken by the UN or regional bodies, on the need for digital resilience for democratic participation and integrity).
2025	Expected Mid-point Review of the UNSC YPS Agenda (A critical review with a focus on the shortcomings of the implementation process, specifically on transitions between 'consultation' and 'power-sharing' approaches, and on efforts for guaranteed youth peacebuilder resource allocation). Its major focus on Climate Action/Just Transition (The youth-led movement forces

	policymakers to understand that environmental resilience is inevitably connected to political
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## Past Solution Attempts

Previous attempts at increasing youth political participation have actually failed because of the reliance on symbolic approach over true power shift. Top-Down Security Frameworks, such as the UN YPS Resolutions, were successful at recognizing youths as the “agents of change,” but it ended up virtually tokenistic because the member states were not willing to give them any authoritative decision-making powers. On the other hand, the Traditional Civic Education Models also failed on the mechanistic fallacy because it overlooked that, despite learning about governance, youths still cannot take actions because of the existing structural impediments, which include the likes of poverty and corruption. This approach ended up with a deodorized curriculum that separated the youth from the realities of politics. Lastly, Non-Formal Engagement Programs (Youth Councils) on the other hand were successful because it individually improved their skills and resilience, but they also failed because they ended up de-politicized. They only helped the youth cope with the problem, and because of that, it reinforced the existing status of the youth, which went against the strategy for achieving long-lasting stability.

## Possible Solutions

To ensure the effectiveness of the resolution for addressing the problem, the delegates need to formulate the clauses that will transform the relationship between youth and politics profoundly, beyond just the consultative level, into genuine co-governance and power sharing. For the Political/Institutional Area, the formulated resolution will need to require the implementation of practices such as Youth Participatory Budgeting, where youth will have fiscal governance authority for allocating public money, addressing the issue of tokenistic treatment of youth participation previously.

Additionally, addressing the problem within the Educational Area will require delegates to go beyond the acquisition of learning, focusing on the development of critical awareness and resilience. The formulation of the clauses will require youth resilience clusters that will address the integration of vocational training, leadership, and mental support services for youth in marginalized districts, addressing the problem of the Socio-Economic/Vulnerability Area, where delegates need to link the problem of political efficiency with equity. Lastly, the formulated resolution will require the formulation of the new approach termed Resilience Portfolios, where youth will need to measure and validate non-formal engagement and problem-solving expertise, meaning that the delegates will need the formulated solution of the problem to ensure that the proposed solution will facilitate inclusivity.



## Useful Links

Especially videos and charts are available:

Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS):

This is the paramount global political framework that recognizes youth as "agents of change" in peacebuilding, establishing the five pillars your resolution should reinforce.:

<https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/2016/en/109527>

Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policy and Decision-making Processes | UN Policy Brief 3: This brief outlines the guiding principles for effective youth engagement (e.g., Designated, Resourced, Reciprocal Accountability) to overcome institutional barriers.

<https://www.diplomacy.edu/resource/meaningful-youth-engagement-in-policy-and-decision-making-processes-our-common-agenda-policy-brief-3/>

Youth Civic and Political Participation - UNDP Curriculum: A comprehensive training manual that offers practical, adaptive methodologies for trainers to foster youth civic engagement, emphasizing contextual and inclusive training.

[https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/a\\_638465072881174770.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-06/a_638465072881174770.pdf)

Digital civic engagement by young people | UNICEF: Discusses how youth use digital platforms for political expression and highlights the critical need for digital skills to combat misinformation and increase political literacy.

[https://www.unicef.org/media/72436/file/Digital-civic-engagement-by-young-people-2020\\_4.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/72436/file/Digital-civic-engagement-by-young-people-2020_4.pdf)

Youth Rely on Digital Platforms, Need Media Literacy to Access Political Information (CIRCLE, Tufts): Provides recent data demonstrating the strong link between media literacy practices and increased youth voter participation, arguing for media education as a democratic resilience tool.

<https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/youth-rely-digital-platforms-need-media-literacy-access-political-information>

Second Report of the Secretary-General on Youth, Peace and Security (2022):

The follow-up report to UNSCR 2250, offering an analysis of remaining structural challenges and providing detailed recommendations on moving beyond rhetoric to practice.

<https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/policy-issues-and-partnerships/policy/youth>

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[https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/ENG\\_UN-Youth-Guide-LR.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/ENG_UN-Youth-Guide-LR.pdf)

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<https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/2016/en/109527>

Youth Participatory Budgeting Empowers Meaningful Youth Participation | CESIE Policy Brief Excellent academic overview defining YPB as a tool to increase transparency, deepen democracy, and reach "harder-to-reach" young people with fewer opportunities.

<https://cesie.org/media/yupad-policybrief-en.pdf>