



Experiences and views of peace and security among youth in Finland

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- Finland's 2250 network¹
- Changemaker
- The UN Association of Finland
- UN Youth of Finland
- The UN Association of Jyväskylä
- UN Youth of Helsinki
- Refugee Youth Support Finland – Kölvi
- Peace Education Institute
- The Committee of 100
- Anti-racism forum
- Demo finland
- Finnish Centre Youth
- The Social Democratic Youth
- Multicultural Centre Gloria - Jyväskylä
- Ivalon Lukio upper-secondary school
- Nuorten Tampere youth information service
- Aseman lapset (Children of the Station) – Walkers Oulu
- Youth Council of the Sámi Parliament of Finland
- R3 immigrant youth support
- Helsinki Youth Council

¹ Further information: Finnish Youth, Peace and Security website <https://www.2250finland.fi/2250-verkosto/>

Introduction

In April 2018, Minister for Foreign Affairs Timo Soini announced that Finland was to launch a planning process for the world's first national action plan (NAP) for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 Youth, Peace and Security (2015) (henceforth UNSCR 2250). UNSCR 2250 was passed over three years ago, yet to date not a single country has published a national action plan (NAP) for its implementation. Finland is at an advanced stage in the NAP design process and has actively supported the themes of the resolution both at the national and international level, for example, by organising the first ever international symposium on youth participation in peace processes in March 2019.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs requested the Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi to lead a national consultation process, which is designed to feed into the Finnish NAP. In cooperation with Finland's 2250 Network, Allianssi organised a hearing process to map the views and experiences of young people relating to peace and security. Allianssi and the 2250 -network drew up a peace survey and organised 12 consultations across Finland. This report draws together an overview of youth views and thoughts relating to UNSCR 2250, which were collected in the survey and consultations. In addition, it provides recommendations on how youth participation in peace and security processes could be improved.

The national consultation highlighted youth views and experiences on a range of topics, and in particular around three of the resolutions key pillars: participation, prevention and partnerships. The other two pillars – protection, and disarmament and reintegration – are not covered in this report since they did not emerge in the hearing process. It is therefore essential that in the next stage of the NAP design process, organisations and institutions in Finland that work on issues relevant to the youth, peace and security agenda are consulted in order to ensure relevance and alignment of the NAP with existing national strategies and programmes.

1. Framework

There are more young people in the world today than ever before. In Finland, young people account for approximately 20% of the population. In order to achieve sustainable peace and development, young people must be involved in decision-making at all levels, including in processes relevant to building and maintaining peace.

Inclusion diversifies the voices heard in peace processes and youth can play a key role in nurturing social cohesion. Young people are integral to the development of sustainable peace and a secure future for all. An equal and participatory society benefits men and women alike – thus young people should not be seen solely as victims or threats to security.² Young people's meaningful participation and experiences brings new perspectives to decision-making and public discourse.

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted a historical resolution titled 2250 Youth, Peace and Security³. In this landmark resolution, member states recognised for the first time that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without youth participation and support for youth engagement. To achieve and maintain peace - participation at all societal levels and meaningful opportunities such as jobs and education are key. To support the resolution, a second thematic resolution (UNSCR 2419⁴) was adopted in 2018 to further encourage all actors to strengthen young people's meaningful and equal participation in building and maintaining peace and conflict resolution. The youth, peace and security agenda also supports the advancement of the women, peace and security agenda which was first introduced in UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security in 2000⁵ as well as in the subsequent seven⁶ thematic resolutions.

UNSCR 2250 and the subsequent resolution 2419 highlight the positive role young people can play at all levels of peace-building and conflict resolution. Young people are often seen as victims or violent perpetrators instead of recognising their role as peace-builders and as positive agents for change. UNSCR 2250 legally binds member states as it was adopted under the title “Maintenance of international peace and security” referring to Chapter 7 of the UN Charter (Article 39).

Finland has relevant knowhow and credibility to promote the resolution; Finnish youth activists have been promoting the youth, peace and security theme globally since 2011, Finland has also lead by example in young people's participation opportunities for decades: the student council has been provided for in the act on general upper-secondary education (lukiolaki) since 1983, youth councils were introduced in the Local Government Act in 2015, and the UN Youth Delegate Programme was first implemented in Finland in 1997.

In terms of foreign policy, young people should be seen as positive contributors instead of merely as subjects of policy. By investing in young people, we can also influence the global refugee situation and help prevent radicalisation. The resolution aligns with and can provide key support to the effectiveness of Finland's foreign policy. The main objectives of Finland's foreign policy include improving stability in developing countries, supporting young people's job and study opportunities, and preventing radicalisation. These issues are also at the core of the youth peace and security discourse.

² Graeme Simpson et al. (2018). Progress Study: The Missing Peace. UNFPA & PBSO. www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy. As part of the Youth, Peace and Security resolution, the Security Council recommended that the UN Secretary-General commission an extensive report on young people's role in peace-building and conflict prevention. The outcomes of the report should support young people's participation in promoting peace and security at the national, regional and international levels.

³ For further information about the resolution, see e.g. the Youth, Peace and Security website of Finland's 2250 Network: <https://www.2250finland.fi/paatoslauselma/>

⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2419: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2419>

⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 1325: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1325>

⁶ Resolutions, [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2008\)](#), [1889 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#), [2122 \(2013\)](#), [2242 \(2015\)](#)

UNSCR 2250 is also integrally linked to issues relevant to strengthening national security. Finland's national security strategy identifies a number of key security issues also relevant to the youth, peace and security agenda; such as preventing social exclusion, improving job and education opportunities, promoting a participatory and diverse society, and preventing radicalisation and extremism. Therefore UNSCR 2250 provides an international framework for the advancement of Finland's national security and addressing security threats through inclusive and participatory solutions.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) provide a good basis for promoting the implementation of UNSCR 2250. In particular, Goal 16 (peace and justice) and Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) are central to the youth, peace and security discourse. It is important to note that even though Agenda 2030 does not feature a stand-alone, youth-specific goal, the views and needs of young people should nevertheless be taken into account in the context of all the goals. In the 2018 'The Missing Peace'⁷ report, young people from across the globe highlighted the following goals in which a youth-lens should specifically be used to reach targets by 2030:



2. Consultation process

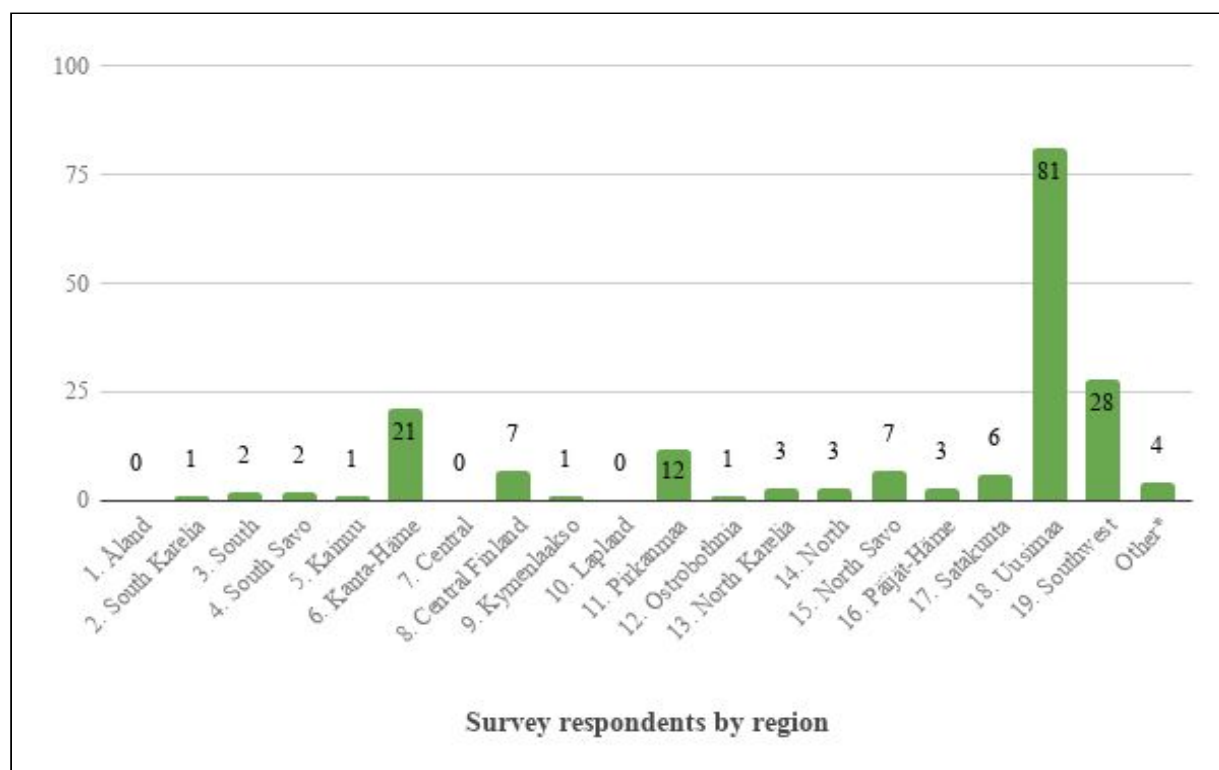
Peace is not an immutable state, which once reached cannot falter and as such must be continuously fostered and strengthened. To ensure long-lasting peace young people must be given a say in decision-making and processes relating to peace and security in order for local, national, regional and international solutions and processes to be sustainable and responsive to the needs of people.

Finland is the first country in the world to develop a NAP to support the implementation of UNSCR 2250. To that end, we wanted to find out what peace means to young people across Finland, and what should be done to promote peace specifically in Finland, but also touching upon global efforts. The definition of youth/young people varies significantly between different countries and international organisations. For example, in Finland the Youth Act defines young people as those under the age of 29, whereas the Youth, Peace and Security resolution refers to young people aged 18–29. For this process youth aged between 15–29 years old were consulted – aligning also with the age categorization of used in the Youth Barometer, which is published in Finland annually.

The hearing process included both a public survey and targeted consultations. In November 2018,

⁷ Graeme Simpson et al. (2018). Progress Study: The Missing Peace. UNFPA & PBSO. www.youth4peace.info/ProgressStudy

Finland's 2250 network designed a peace survey (Appendix 1), which was distributed through the network's stakeholders in two stages (Appendix 2). The first survey period was two weeks in November–December 2018, and the second period was four weeks in January–February 2019. During the first round, the survey was published only in Finnish, but in the second round the survey was made available in both of Finland's main official languages; Finnish and Swedish. Over 60 local and national organizations and networks were requested to distribute the survey. To ensure diversity of respondents, special care was placed to identify organisations that work with young people from various minority groups. The survey was also sent to the UN school network via the UN Association of Finland⁸. Responses were received from 207 young people (28% were under the age of 18); 67.5% were young women, 28.2% were young men and 4.3% did not identify as either or preferred not to respond.



* Other: Finns living abroad or did not disclose location.

In total, 12 consultations with young people were organised (Appendix 3) nationally, with 116 young people taking part. The consultations were organised in cooperation with 16 youth organizations and one upper-secondary school. To ensure diversity of participants the consultations were organized with different partners and to lower barriers for participation the meetings were organized at youth friendly spaces and after school/work hours. For example, in one of the consultations (Oulu), the coordinator accompanied youth outreach workers on their rounds to introduce the consultation idea and invite young people to come and discuss the topic further at the local Walker's café (a safe space for young people). With the R3 organisation, consultations were organised at evenings to coincide with events booked for specific youth groups in the organisation's facilities. When organising the consultations, special attention was paid to engaging young people from different backgrounds and age groups in order to ensure a diverse range of ideas and views. Finally, the draft of the report was made available for public commenting before finalization to allow for participants, partners and other interested parties to comment on the report

⁸ The school network of the UN Association of Finland includes 135 schools from across the country. Further information: <https://www.ykliitto.fi/YK70v/YK-koulu>

before publication. Feedback from the consultations was very positive, and the topic was seen as interesting and important – in some consultations, calls were made for similar opportunities in the future.

3. Youth views on peace and security resolution

3.1. Peace is not possible without security, and security is not possible without peace

In the peace survey, young people were asked what peace means to them in Finland. In the open response format, the absence of war/conflicts was mentioned most often; the second most common answer was security, and the third most common was equality/non-discrimination. The fact that equality was among the three most common responses is explained by the relatively high proportion of female participants – only a handful of young males mentioned equality. It appears that equality is seen primarily as a women's rights issue, instead of as something that has a positive impact on well-being in society as a whole and how it contributes to peace.

The security category included responses such as “not having to be scared when going out”, “everyone is safe”, “you can move around and express yourself freely”, etc. The equality/non-discrimination category also included responses which referred to everyone's right and ability to be and live as themselves. In the consultations, various minority groups highlighted racism, the rise of extremism and discrimination as matters affecting their sense of security. For many young people, peace is the sum of many things, as one respondent summarised:

“Peace means many things for me. Peace is stability which means that the country is not at war or heading into a conflict, but on the other hand peace also means human rights and their realisation. Peace means international institutions, even though their popularity has been tested in recent years. Sustainable development and democracy are essential to peace. Peace also means an individual's ability to walk the streets in peace and feel that they are safe. It is also about everyday respect for other people. Peace is about empathy and striving towards it.”
Male, 26

When asked about factors that support security in everyday life, over two thirds of the respondents mentioned friends and family. Meaningful activity such as hobbies and volunteering were also mentioned, in addition to studying and work. The responses are not surprising, since hobbies and communities strengthen the sense of belonging and participation, and thus promote well-being in general. In terms of factors that reduce security in everyday life, harassment and a sense of insecurity in public places were mentioned far more often than other factors. There were differences between the sexes: over a third of young women mentioned harassment compared to less than tenth of young male respondents. In one of the consultations, harassment highlighted by young women led to a discussion about how it could be ensured that harassment can be tackled proactively by addressing behaviour, instead of individuals or groups who experience harassment having to find ways to cope with it. There were no significant differences between respondents in terms of a sense of insecurity in public places. Approximately one fifth of the respondents did not report any factors that affect their security in everyday life.

Many young people felt that online hate speech and abuse affect participation. The current climate in online discussions can even deter participation for some young people, especially women and those individuals whose name or appearance suggests that they belong in a minority group – they avoid public discussion online, as they cannot cope with the level of hate speech targeted at themselves and their communities. This means that the space for public discourse becomes

narrower and, at its worst, creates a false online democracy where only middle-aged white men dare to speak, and their voice becomes the “voice of the people”. Instead of focusing on freedom of speech, people should find ways to make the public sphere safe for all participants. On the other hand, online participation can offer new and positive opportunities. The digital sphere is fairly new as a discussion tool, and it can develop in a more positive direction. For example, commenting under one’s own name could increase the threshold for hate speech, if participation requires using personal information instead of ‘troll’ accounts.

Approximately 10% of respondents felt that the news and media decreased their sense of security. This was highlighted in the consultations. Examples included the media coverage of the stabbings in Turku and the rape cases in Oulu. The emphasis in news on the suspects’ backgrounds and ethnic origin was seen to exacerbate prejudice and thus decrease people’s sense of security. The respondents felt that the media sometimes emphasises the ethnic origin of suspects who are of foreign nationality, which increases prejudice towards all immigrants and asylum-seekers. The way in which the media reports on conflicts in other countries also influences people’s sense of security in Finland. The media is seen as an important source of information, but at times it can also be a source of anxiety.

If young people knew about opportunities for advancing peace and security, we would definitely be interested and involved.
Helsinki Youth Committee

When asked about factors that could promote peace and security in Finland, the young respondents mentioned equality and non-discrimination, an open and high-quality public discussion culture, and better understanding between different groups. The prevention of discrimination and inequality was also mentioned as an important factor in promoting a sense of security. In terms of promoting peace in Finland, just under one fifth of the respondents mentioned diplomacy and Finland’s role in international settings such as the UN and the European Union (EU).

The importance of advancing peace was surveyed in the most recent Youth Barometer⁹, which found that 99 percent of young people see peace as at least somewhat important. Equality was also highlighted in the Barometer responses. In addition, 87 percent of the respondents felt that it was very or somewhat important that Finland promotes peace as part of the EU. 96 percent of young people said it was very or somewhat important that Finland promotes human rights in the European Union, and 94 percent said that the promotion of environmental conservation is very or somewhat important. The peace survey revealed similar views: respondents would like Finland to focus on the importance of equality, climate change and education on the international stage. On the other hand, some of the young respondents felt that international peace-building should not be undertaken at the expense of one’s own country: people’s rights and opportunities should first be secured domestically.

3.2. Opportunities for civic engagement and participation

In Finland, there are already many good practices relating to young people’s participation, such as youth councils in local government which are prescribed in law since 2015, various other youth councils including that of the Sámi Parliament and the Roma youth council, as well as opportunities created by an active civic society. Still, many young people are left outside these mechanisms or do not find them relatable. In particular, engaging in political activities, policy discussions and political processes in general are alien to many young people, resulting in a lack of ownership of common issues.

⁹ Elina Pekkarinen & Sami Myllyniemi (eds). 2018. Influence on the edge of Europe: Youth Barometer 2018.

The role of family and friends in young people's participation was highlighted, as well as the role of schools and family support services from childhood onwards. Encouragement from family and peers is important in sparking and maintaining interest in participation and civic engagement. Each young person should have the opportunity to be part of a community that feels meaningful to them, for example in the form of recreational activity. In addition to family background, geography plays a significant role for participation. Power is centralised in the Helsinki metropolitan region, and political activity is different there from other parts of the country. Opportunities can be limited in smaller municipalities, and local government processes can seem to be in the hands of just a few persons or small elite groups.

It seems to me that processes and structures in which young people should involve themselves in are too complicated and foreign. Even very basic meeting practices seem to alienate many young people.

Other, 29

Around half of survey respondents found that they were able (at least well) to participate in "peace work". However, it should be noted that the question did not define what peace work means, and the responses are thus based on young people's own understanding of what peace work consists. Over a third of the respondents said that they are not aware of opportunities in their local area, and approximately one in six felt that lack of time affected their ability to participate. Other factors were belief in personal capabilities, motivation, and the experience that participation does not make a difference.

Young people who were not active in organised civic engagement activities were interested in participating in decision-making, but they felt that young people are heard but not listened to. Young people's participation is perhaps seen more as actions which create the impression that young people have been heard, instead of actually listening to what they have to say. Decision-making in and of itself, the language of politics and relevant processes were seen as too high-brow, and the impact of one's own voice outside the immediate living environment was seen as questionable.

Young people who had participated in e.g. political youth organisations naturally had a more positive view of their own influencing ability, but they also recognised barriers to participation. Young people can often have a limited role in party politics. They are not always seen as full and equal members, and they are often recruited to run support functions, or an enthusiastic young volunteer may be given too much responsibility and tasks which lead to exhaustion. The differences between the opportunities and roles available for young women and men were also highlighted. Young people have to do more to achieve things, and young women even more so. On average, young women have a tougher time than men when applying for positions. There is a risk that young people are pigeon-holed in party politics based on their age and sex. Many parties have a young man as their youth mascot. It can be difficult or even impossible for women to find a balance between giving up too easily and being labelled a 'difficult woman'. This phenomenon is also seen in other spheres of society. Men's competencies and skills are not questioned in the same way as women's. Women more often take, or are given, roles that do not advance their careers. A similar trend was identified in the civil society where many young people volunteer in the hopes of gaining experience: many enthusiastic volunteers take on lots of different roles and tasks, but these contributions do not result in anything meaningful in the future.

Some young people have a simplistic idea about what politics is, even though there are myriad forms of political activity. Participation does not have to follow a specific path, as long as young people have opportunities to participate according to their own abilities and interests. For example, some young people find a 'pop-up' style of advocacy more interesting than conventional politics. On the other hand, the importance of elections and voting must be emphasised, as they ultimately

have the biggest impact. Even within parties and political youth organisations, the importance of running for office is not always understood.

Parties face a great challenge in making politics more appealing to young people, who are more likely to get involved in petition-based campaigns than to volunteer in party organisations as ‘coffeemakers’ or where they end up doing a lot of grunt work on their own. Parties need to regenerate themselves. The challenge for parties is to decide whether young people are seen as representatives of their generation in the party and its policy-formulation, or merely as young faces to garner youth support for the party’s existing policies. Young people must be given more attention in parties. Parties programmes’ should address the generational impacts of political decisions as well as those of party-level policies. Parties should highlight the sex- and generation-specific impacts of their policies as part of their programme development. Young people must be taken into account in all sectors, and not just in those relating to education or recreational activities.

Youth are interested in decisions-making if they can learn that it is a natural part of their lives. If participation is solely dependent on a young person's will and interest, only the most motivated or those whose family favors it will participate. Many have not learned the principles of a participatory society, e.g. they lack experience of taking part in civil society activities or collaborations. Everybody should be involved in some activity and everyone should be involved in local democracy from a young age, for example through school and youth councils.

Female, 29

3.3. Participation

Participation in decision-making at levels is a central theme in UNSCR 2250. The resolution emphasises the role of states in young people’s meaningful participation in peace processes and calls for the inclusion of young people in their planning, implementation and monitoring. Young people’s role in promoting a culture of peace and as active participants in building and maintaining a peaceful society is emphasised.

3.3.1. Existing structures must be reinforced and supported

Youth councils, student unions as well as national and regional youth services could be more effective than currently is the case in incorporating the voices and views of young people into political decision-making. The influencing opportunities of youth councils and delegates, as well as their representation in and access to key decision-making processes, should be strengthened. Local authorities should ensure that youth councils and youth services have the necessary resources to develop the civic engagement skills of young people of different ages, backgrounds and abilities with regard to existing decision-making processes, and at the same time older decision-makers should be encouraged to meet with young people on their terms, including outside the municipal decision-making mechanisms. The diversity and representativeness of youth councils requires more focus. Youth councils’ resources for disseminating information about their responsibilities and opportunities should be improved. Ways to consult and hear peer groups should be supported in order to ensure that youth councils are genuinely representative.

Cooperation between political youth organisations effectively supports democracy and social peace. For example, various consultations, the *Week of Politics* campaign organised by youth organisations and Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi, and the ‘shadow’ governmental negotiations organised by political youth organisations all have shown that NGOs and associations are capable of diverse forms of cooperation. For example, in Helsinki, employees from different political youth organisations meet frequently and coordinate school visits together. This kind of cooperation should be supported at both central and local government levels. It would also be

valuable to examine how these efficient collaborations and a culture of constructive discourse could also be developed between political parties.

Awareness should be increased about the work being done by the organisations and other youth work operators in areas relating to the Youth, Peace and Security theme. It is important to analyse how the activities of youth organisations help to implement the UN resolution. Such analyses would also facilitate more effective monitoring of the 2250 agenda at the national level. For example, YMCA Finland has, at the national and international levels, articulated its activities from the point of view of the youth, peace and security framework in order to gain a better understanding of its own work around the theme and to promote the spirit of international policies relating to the strategic development of youth work.¹⁰

3.3.2. Engaging youth on their own terms

Youth and young adulthood include various transitional periods, as young people finish school and become students or start working, leave home and begin creating their own lives outside their childhood environment. Ways to reach and hear young people must be developed and added to decision-making processes. Young people's awareness of participation opportunities must be increased via formal education and by other means, such as communication channels that are popular among young people.

Young people need spaces to meet and have discussions.
Female, 25

In decision-making, effort should be made to improve transparency, and young people should be heard throughout decision-making and preparatory processes, and not just before the final decision. Young people should be informed about the impact that different decision may have. Long decision-making processes are a bad fit with young people's rapidly changing

lives. In order for young people to perceive participation as meaningful and impactful, it is important to provide easy access to information about the stages and outcomes of these processes. It is important to remember that many young people participate in the promotion of peace and security alongside their jobs and studies. For example, hearings and events organised during office hours, short feedback cycles and time-consuming processes can be barriers to participation for many young people.

3.3.3. Representativeness

Young people's presence, visibility and active role in the promotion of peace and security must be ensured at all levels. It is important to remember that young people are not one homogeneous group – the diversity of young people's voices is crucial. Municipal youth councils and other youth councils and initiatives such as participatory budgeting¹¹ enable young people's perspectives to be included in various processes, but the diversity and representativeness of such initiatives must be ensured.

Local authorities, schools, NGOs and recreational organisations must also be active in developing ways to ensure that young people are involved in developing and deciding directions and goals, for example, by ensuring that young people have full representation in steering groups, committees and boards, and by developing open and participatory planning processes. It is important to

¹⁰ Further information: YMCA Finland Case Study <https://ymca.fi/2250-2/>

¹¹ Example: City of Helsinki, the RuutiBudjetti budgetary model <http://ruutibudjetti.munstadi.fi/>

emphasise that youth is a transitional phase during which the young person's experiences and opportunities are determined by a multitude of factors, including sex, gender identity, socio-economic background, where they live, and their cultural background. Young people's inclusion and experiences should be seen in the context of this diversity. It is also important to recognise that the methods to be used for hearing young people are different than those used to hear children.

Finland has many relatively young MPs in international comparison. Globally in 2015, approximately 1.9% of representatives were under the age of 30¹²; in Finland, 7% of MPs elected in the 2015 general election were young people. However, the situation is not stable, as most of the young MPs turn 30 in their first parliamentary term, which means that new young MPs should be elected in each election. This should encourage consideration of different types of systems, such as the election-by-list system used in Sweden. On the other hand, parties have a great responsibility in promoting young candidates: while they are included on lists, do they get support and assistance? Some parties support young candidates by offering a reduced candidacy fee or by waiving it. However, young candidates are usually only supported by the party's youth organisation, or they have to rely on the good will and enthusiasm of their local activists.

My community announces opportunities through school, but I wish they would invest more in other opportunities outside the school with emphasis on outside of school activities.

Male, 16

3.3.4. Opportunities for low-threshold civic engagement

During the hearing process, it became clear that while young people are interested in issues relating to peace and security, they felt that lack of information about opportunities and their personal resources made their participation less likely. For that reason, it would be important to disseminate information about opportunities and provide low-threshold participation opportunities. Young people's digital skills and "pop-up" engagement methods offer possibilities. Citizen petitions are a good way to encourage public debate and provide participation opportunities according to individual capabilities. However, in this context it is worth remembering young people's experiences of the negative side of online discussions, such as hate speech and trolling. In order to ensure that the possibilities offered by technological advancements lead to equal opportunities, the public discussion sphere must be safe for all participants. Young people themselves should also be encouraged to think of ways to develop peer-to-peer cooperation mechanisms.

3.3.5. Are there equal opportunities for participation for all?

The consultations and the peace survey highlighted the need for various minority groups, such as young people with disabilities, and ethnic and sexual minorities, to be able to fully participate in decision-making. Young people find it difficult to get their voices heard, and in some minority groups, young people find participation even more difficult. For that reason, young people's participation cannot be supported by merely consulting them – we must think of ways to create opportunities that allow diverse groups of young people to participate and have their views heard.

For example, young people's participation in decision-making could be ensured by using quotas that take into account age as well as minority statuses and other potential vulnerabilities, such as

¹² Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. Youth participation in national parliaments.

<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2016-07/youth-participation-in-national-parliaments>

socio-economic background. Young people see it as important that they have a recognised status and genuine opportunities to engage. Young people should also be genuinely involved in all stages of decision-making and peace processes: their planning, implementation, monitoring and impact assessment. Inclusion should be broad-based, so that young people are not consulted only during one stage of the process or in a limited context.

3.4. Prevention

UNSCR 2250 resolution urges governments to support young people's inclusion by establishing frameworks in which young people are supported in activities designed to prevent violence. Young people must be included in peace-building processes and promoting a culture of peace.

3.4.1. Strengthening dialogue and interaction between different groups

The importance of shared understanding and a constructive atmosphere for discussions was highlighted in the consultation process. In particular, stereotypes about minority groups, prejudices passed down from generation to generation, and the mentality of judging a group based on the actions of individuals have a negative effect on the sense of security among some young people

Involving young people in decision-making for example grassroots action in schools and youth centres. Young people should be included in decision-making broadly, not just particularly active young people; the voice of young people is more diverse than that of a few middle-class aspiring politicians. Attention should be given to e.g. how young people in sparsely populated areas or poor families can get involved in decision-making.

Male, 25

from minority groups. Interaction opportunities and an understanding of difference are seen as important factors in improving the sense of security. Discussions and encounters outside one's own "bubble" help people understand different viewpoints. For that reason, discussions between young people as well as different generations and people from different backgrounds should be better facilitated. Interaction opportunities should be organised, and not just left to happen organically in informal settings such as youth clubs. For example, school visits by various organisations and actors, programmes that support young people's mobility, and discussions in recreational settings about difference and diverse society would be important. Consultations with political youth organisations also highlighted the importance of continuous and broad-based work to

encourage and educate young people about civic engagement. Youth voting campaigns alone are not enough.

3.4.2. Opportunities to participate in peace work

Global citizenship education as part of education and young people's lives

In the hearing process, many young people said that they did not know how they could participate in promoting peace. Young people need more information about various channels for getting involved. It is important to inform young people about different NGOs, educational options and other opportunities. Broad-based support in the education system and teachers' continuing education are important in ensuring that young people become accustomed to peace-building themes. These themes and the related civic engagement opportunities should be discussed comprehensively as part of various school subjects. History, the causes and consequences of wars and the meaning of peace should be discussed. Various cultural education models were also seen as impactful, and their use should be supported in both schools and NGOs. In discussions with Roma and Sámi youth, trainings and events in which young Roma and Sámi have talked about their

cultures and traditions were highlighted as good ways to combat prejudice and stereotypes. These types of events have been piloted with schools and people who work in the security sector¹³.

Young people's political education

Young people's interest in and knowledge of participation opportunities, the formation of a political identity and an understanding of societal discourse play a key role in encouraging young people to get involved in civic engagement and decision-making. In discussions with political youth organisations, the attitudes of schools towards politics were seen as conflicting.

According to the organisations' experiences, schools are not necessarily open to visits by political organisations, even if political education is seen as important. The organisations feel that although schools teach children about the importance of civic engagement, children are not encouraged to explore it as part of their school experience.

Schools' relations with political parties and youth organisations vary greatly, and in some schools active political engagement is seen as a positive thing. Student debates using different party-political arguments, political candidate panels, for example in conjunction with local elections, youth elections coordinated by Allianssi, group projects and presentations about political parties, Week of Politics campaign, visits to local government sessions as part of civic education, and youth council elections were all seen as good ways of supporting political engagement in schools. It is important that education is continuous rather than linked to elections or once-yearly events. Young people must be given opportunities to ask, challenge and argue, and not just passively receive information about political parties.

Only rarely do young people have space in our local peace negotiation processes, even though young people have the power to make a difference. For example, tackling marginalization should be planned and implemented, with proper resources, by young people as well, not just through municipal strategic boards.
Female, 18

There is also disparity between schools in this respect: some schools have resources and opportunities to organise a range of events, whereas some others have very limited resources. Schools and recreational organisations should provide young people with a range of opportunities to explore the full spectrum of politics. Peer-to-peer political education is especially important to reinforce the idea that politics is not just for older generations.

Peace-promotion skills

More effort should be made to strengthen young people's peace-promotion skills. The existing peer support and mediation systems in schools are good examples of this, but similar opportunities should be offered in the context of e.g. recreational activities and workplaces. This view is supported by the responses to the question about conflict resolution skills in the most recent Youth Barometer: 89% of the young respondents felt that young people should be taught conflict resolution skills, and 80% believe that peace is a question of will.¹⁴

3.4.3. Social exclusion in the context of peace and security

Young people's social exclusion has been a topic of much debate in Finland in recent years. Exclusion is seen as both a social and a security issue. Young people in Finland also see exclusion as detrimental to security, although their trust in their own future is strong.¹⁵ The consultations

¹³ Consultation with Finnish Roma youth 18.3.2019.

¹⁴ Elina Pekkarinen & Sami Myllyniemi (eds). 2018. Influence on the edge of Europe: Youth Barometer 2018.

¹⁵ Elina Pekkarinen & Sami Myllyniemi (eds). 2018. Influence on the edge of Europe: Youth Barometer 2018.

highlighted the importance of diversely engaging young people in discussions about how exclusion in the context of youth could be prevented, and the importance of taking into account the diversity of young people in the prevention of social exclusion. In addition to general factors of exclusion, community-specific exclusion should also be taken into account: for example, in the consultation with young Roma, there was discussion about young people who become excluded from both society and their own communities.

3.4.4. Harnessing the resources of young people with immigrant backgrounds and experiences of conflict

In the consultations, young people with immigrant or refugee backgrounds felt that they could have specific skills and resources to promote peace, as they have more first-hand experience of peace and conflict in their countries of origin. Young people who have experienced conflict also have a broader understanding of the importance of peace and how it should be sought and supported. The young respondents wanted to see more discussions between the native population and young people with immigrant backgrounds, which would enable them to share experiences, approaches and ideas about peace promotion in different countries and cultures. In addition, young people with immigrant backgrounds may have cross-border contacts in their countries of origin, which could be utilised in peace work on the ground in conflict regions. Young people with immigrant or refugee backgrounds expressed their wish to be seen as a positive part of society and not just as people who

Youth organizations are really important as are experienced people who provide support. Dismissing young people and questioning of their skills as well as outdated structures hinder participation.

Male, 22

need help or are at risk of radicalisation or social exclusion. They felt that it is important to explore how peace and reconciliation could be promoted in Finland between different groups, and especially between minority groups and the native population.

3.5. Partnerships

The resolution also emphasises the importance of partnerships. Governments must establish and strengthen partnerships with various actors. This can be done by increasing political, financial, technical and logistical support for UN actors who promote peace, progress and equality; by adhering to recommendations on involving young people in developing peace strategies during and

after conflict; by engaging local actors; and by empowering local youth, families, women and community leaders to combat extremism and promote social inclusion and participation.

3.5.1. Cross-generational cooperation

Young people's meaningful and broad-based participation provides opportunities for developing new ideas and approaches to promoting peace and security. Young people's ideas and innovations should be utilised in peace-building and decision-making processes and in other decisions that shape society. They have experiential knowledge that can help improve the impact and relevance of measures. According to young people, their strengths include creativity in developing new ideas and ability to offer new perspectives.

To enable all this, young people need allies and partners who support their participation. In particular, cross-generational, equal cooperation can be seen as critical to highlighting young people's views and experiences, especially at higher levels; combining their views and experiences with those of experienced contributors, who may have a broader understanding of the impacts of policies and actions, can lead to better and more relevant decision-making. Mentoring, support and

active listening support the effectiveness of young people's participation. For example, the 'lean-in' concept, which is used in the context of women's empowerment, and visible support and encouragement shown by influential actors to support young people's voices and actions can also be helpful in supporting young people's participation. In local and national steering programmes, young people should be represented and heard in all stages of the process as full participants and not just as people who are consulted about their experiences.

3.5.2. Accessibility

Special attention must be paid to the accessibility of civic engagement and participation opportunities. Potential barriers to participation include e.g. sex, gender identity, functional ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, nationality, beliefs, education, professional status or socio-economic background. Decision-makers, organisations, schools and other actors must strengthen ways and approaches to enable young people with different backgrounds and abilities to participate in the promotion of peace and security.

For example, in the consultation with young people with immigrant backgrounds, language-based accessibility was identified as an important consideration already in the planning stage. It required communicating in simple language and introducing the topic in stages. The consideration of different levels of ability also means allocating enough time for encouraging young people to explore and express their views. Working with young people from diverse backgrounds requires flexible scheduling and a diverse set of working approaches from authorities and professionals. During the hearing process, young people's views were sought across the spectrum by cooperating with organisations that work with young people from minority groups and in outreach youth work.

It's also our world. We should get to decide what it's like.
Female, 17

3.5.3. Finland as an international advocate for peace and security

During the hearing process, young people were asked about their views on peace-promotion in an international context. They mentioned measures for promoting equality, education, and supporting young people's inclusion and democracy as Finland's strengths. Finnish diplomacy was also seen as an effective way to promote peace around the world. The connection between international peace-promotion and Finland's national security was recognised. Similarly, in the Youth Barometer¹⁶ young people also saw peace as the most important issue that Finland should promote as part of the EU. Existing structures for promoting young people's role should also be supported in the future, and effort should be made to find ways to diversify young people's access to international processes. For example, this can be done by supporting youth delegate programmes, by funding youth mobility programmes, and by working with young people to innovate new, international participation opportunities for youth from diverse backgrounds.

¹⁶ Elina Pekkarinen & Sami Myllyniemi (eds). 2018. Influence on the edge of Europe: Youth Barometer 2018.

4. General recommendations for implementing the Youth, Peace and Security resolution

❖ *Youth participation as a new flagship goal for Finland*

Finland has extensive experience of involving young people in decision-making, and it is something to be proud of. Existing structures should be supported to ensure that young people can participate in the promotion of peace and security in meaningful and diverse ways. Although the inclusion of young people in Finland can still be developed further, Finland should showcase its expertise and knowhow in this area internationally.

❖ *A strategic, binding and monitored 2250 implementation programme*

Finland is the first country in the world to draw up a national programme in this area. The programme must set out concrete measures and indicators for the resolution's implementation. The necessary resources should be allocated and responsibilities for the targets should be assigned to relevant ministries. A national cross-sectoral monitoring group should be established to monitor the programme's implementation, with youth in key roles. The programme should be monitorable and binding on the government.

❖ *Global citizenship education and exchange of information*

Education should be based on independent research and strong expertise everywhere in the world. High-quality education and knowledge that are underpinned by independent research provide young people with tools for rejecting violent extremism and for promoting human rights and democracy. Peace promotion also requires participation and resilience skills. The dissemination in Finland of the best international tools and projects of global citizenship education should be promoted. The role of global citizenship education (including peace education, human rights education and democracy education) should be strengthened both in curricula and teacher training. Sufficient resources should be allocated to all organisations that deliver global citizenship education.

❖ *Finland must support opportunities for young people's civic engagement both nationally and internationally*

Partnerships and collaboration between youth groups and different generations should be supported. Young people's meaningful and broad-based participation provides opportunities for developing new ideas and approaches to promoting peace and security. Young people's ideas and innovations should be utilised in peace-building and decision-making processes and in other decisions that shape society. Finland and the EU should increase their support for interaction opportunities across external borders, for example, with Europe's immediate neighbours.

❖ *Support for peace work carried out by young people and the youth sector*

More resources and funding should be allocated for peace work carried out by young people and the youth sector. Finland should offer more support and opportunities for young people's peer-to-peer peace work and youth work that promotes peace in Finland and abroad. For example, this could be done by prioritising some of the funds allocated for peace projects to youth-themed

projects which youth organisations could apply for. Youth organisations' ability to map the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in their existing activities should also be supported.

❖ *Young people at the centre of Finland's foreign policy*

Sustainable development and peace cannot be achieved without the strong involvement of the largest youth generation in history. The Finnish experience of young people's inclusion creates opportunities for bringing young people into the centre of Finland's foreign policy and international development policy and involving a youth representative in all major international summits such as at the UN. Young people should be involved in designing development cooperation projects that are relevant to them, as has already been done in Denmark¹⁷. The hearing of young people should be further strengthened by continuing round-table discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other executives from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

❖ *Finland should support the Youth, Peace and Security resolution politically in international settings*

Finland should support the advancement of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda at all relevant international fora, such as the EU, the European Council, OSCE and the UN.

¹⁷ DANIDA. 2017. The World 2030. <http://amg.um.dk/en/policies-and-strategies/strategy-for-danish-development-cooperation/>

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Peace survey

A survey on peace and peacework	
	<p>We are collecting the views of young people in Finland about peace and peace-promotion. The results will be used by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the preparation of Finland's first programme for the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security resolution. The responses will be processed anonymously. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and developed by Finland's 2250 Network.</p> <p>We want to find out how young people in Finland can promote peace and security in their own lives and society at large.</p> <p>“Peacework” means a range of activities or actions promoting peace, as well as your individual world view. It is not just about promoting peace between nations: it also includes peace and connection between individuals, or peace in everyday life.</p> <p>The survey is open until 15 February 2019. Response time: 15 minutes.</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Male ○ Woman ○ Other ○ Don't know ○ Prefer not to say
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Home town/city
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisation/NGO, if applicable (e.g. Tikkurilan lukio, Eurooppanuoret)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does peace in Finland mean to you?
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What things or actions would promote peace in Finland in your opinion?
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What actions or things do you personally promote or would like to promote?
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your everyday life, do you experience things that strengthen your sense of security?
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your everyday life, do you experience things that weaken your sense of security?
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In your opinion, what should be done to improve your sense of security?
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● From whom would you like to see concrete actions to support your sense of security? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians • Authorities (e.g. the police) • Non-governmental organisations • Other young people • Activists

12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, how could young people prevent others from joining extremist groups?
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, what can be done to reintegrate young people who have been involved in extremist groups back into society?
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you see your own opportunities to participate in peace promotion? Peace promotion can include international peace negotiations and anti-bullying campaigns in schools, and everything in between. 1 No opportunities to participate 5 Excellent opportunities to participate
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything that prevents you from participating in peace promotion? Example: "I don't know about opportunities in my home town."
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of peace promotion would you like to see Finland do in the future domestically or internationally?
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that you can participate in decision-making on matters that affect your own life? For example, at school, in local government or at the national level? 1 Poor or non-existent opportunities to participate in decision-making 5 Excellent opportunities to participate in decision-making
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What helps or prevents young people from participating in decision-making?
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your opinion, are there any specific groups whose participation in decision-making is especially limited?
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything else you would like to tell us, or did we forget to ask something?

Appendix 2: A list of NGOs and networks who were asked to publicise the survey to their target groups

The 2250 Network
The Union of Conscientious Objectors
Aseman Lapset ry - Stationens barn rf
Ecumenical Youth
EYP - Finland ry
Finlands Svenska Skolungdomsförbund (FSS) rf
Student Union of the University of Helsinki
The Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities
The Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland
Development Centre Opinkirjo
Centre Students Finland KOL
National Church Council
Youth of the National Coalition Party
Student Union of National Coalition Party (Tuhatkunta) KVT ry
Kynnys ry
Lammin lukio
Student Union of the University of Lapland
CMI youth network
Lennonit
Missionary Society
Magma Akademi 2018 (civic engagement course of the Swedish-language Magma think-tank)
Music Against Drugs ry
YMCA Nuoret
Muslimit ry
Nuori Kirkko ry
Agenda 2030 Youth Group
Youth Mental Health Association – Yeesi ry
The Trade Union of Education in Finland, OAJ
Orthodox Youth Association of Finland
Plan International Finland
Show Racism the Red Card
Roma Youth Council Romano
Missio ry
The Committee of 100
Peace Ambassadors
Sateenvarjo ry
SETA ry., Finnish association for sexual and gender minorities
Social Democratic Youth
Social Democratic Students
National Union of Vocational Students in Finland - SAKKI ry
Finnish Centre Youth
The Union of Upper Secondary School Students
The Finnish Youth Centre Network
The Union of Local Youth Councils in Finland
Suomen Opiskelija-Allianssi ry - OSKU ry
Suomen Opiskelijakuntien liitto – SAMOK ry
Finnish National Rescue Association SPEK
Finnish Red Cross
Suomen Romaniyhdistys ry
Suoma Sámi Nuorat
The Finnish Federation of Settlement Houses
The Finnish Somalia Network
UN Association of Finland
UN Youth of Finland and member associations
National Union of University Students in Finland

Operation a Day's Work (ODW) Finland
The Student Union of the University of Tampere
The Student Union of the University of Turku
The Student Union of the University of Vaasa VAMLAS ry
Varusmiesliitto
Federation of Green Youth and Students (ViNO) ry
All Our Children

Appendix 3: Consultations

#	Date	Organiser(s)	In cooperation	City	Participants
1	28/09/2018	Changemaker, UN Youth, Kōlvi		Helsinki / Tampere	30 people
2	13/10/2018	Peace Education Institute, the Committee of 100, Anti-racism Forum		Helsinki	13 people
3	04/12/2018	Demo finland, Finnish Centre Youth, Social Democratic Youth		Helsinki	5 people
4	07/02/2019	Allianssi ry	R3 - immigrant youth support (a meeting for young women with immigrant backgrounds)	Vantaa	2 people
5	12/02/2019	Allianssi ry	Ivalon Lukio upper-secondary school	Ivalo	12 people
6	13/02/2019	Demo finland, Finnish Centre Youth, Social Democratic Youth		Helsinki	5 people
7	14/02/2019	Allianssi ry	Nuorten Tampere youth information service (Monitoimitalo 13, youth service centre)	Tampere	7 people
8	15/02/2019	Allianssi ry	Helsinki Youth Council	Helsinki	5 people
9	18/02/2019	Allianssi ry	Aseman lapset (Walkers outreach youth work)	Oulu	12 people (interviews)
10	22/02/2019 & 12/02/2019	Allianssi ry	Youth Council of the Sámi Parliament of Finland	Helsinki & Ivalo	2 people (interview)
11	27/02/2019	The UN Association of Jyväskylä, UN Youth	Multicultural Centre Gloria	Jyväskylä	13 people
12	18/03/2019	Allianssi ry	R3 - immigrant youth support (a meeting for Roma youth)	Vantaa	10 people