United Nations

Alliance of Civilizations

* **Main challenges faced by young people;**

* + Youth remain on the margins or are excluded from participating in the promotion of peace, sustainable development and human rights.
    - Young people lack opportunities for training regarding leadership roles.
  + Youth have limited space for freedom of expression and may face restricted access to information.
    - Young people lack opportunities for training regarding media literacy skills.
  + Youth are most often seen as the perpetrators or victims of violence.
  + The cultural and religious dimensions are often neglected when addressing youth issues.
  + Young people face challenges around inequality and exclusion.

* **Examples of discrimination against young people in the exercise of their rights;**

* + Discrimination faced by young people based on their cultural or religious beliefs, including not given the freedom to express their religious beliefs.
  + Young people not having access to education that promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups.
  + Discrimination occurs against young people due to gender disparity in certain societies.

* **Examples of policies and programmes aimed at supporting young people to realise their rights.**

* + UNAOC participates in and organizes policy discussions, fora and events to raise decision-makers’ awareness on young people’s contribution to issues of fostering understanding and collaboration between people of different cultural backgrounds, preventing violent conflict and violent extremism. UNAOC is a member of the Inter-agency Network on Youth and Development and the Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding. With other UN and civil society organizations, UNAOC advocates for and defends the interests of young people working at all levels, promotes their work to mainstream agencies and established institutions at the international level, aiming to integrate youth participation into all activities and policy related to intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and violence prevention. UNAOC is particularly involved in advocating for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 and the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security.
  + UNAOC develops programming to highlight and enhance the ability of young women and young men to foster mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions. UNAOC includes educational dimensions in all of its youth programming in order to better support young people’s and their organizations’ competence development. Examples include:
    - The [Young Peacebuilders Programme](https://www.unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects/young-peacebuilders/)is a peace education programme that UNAOC is implementing in different regions of the world to offer competence development to young people and to grow and strengthen the global movement of young peacebuilders. Through this action, UNAOC is committing to support young people’s participation in peacebuilding with a growing coalition of partners. The programme is designed to support young people in gaining skills that can enhance their positive role in issues of peace and security and in preventing violent conflict. It also brings visibility to the initiatives, actions and projects initiated by young people towards peace and the promotion of diversity and human rights.
    - The [Youth Solidarity Fund](https://www.unaoc.org/what-we-do/grants-and-competitions/youth-solidarity-fund/) supports youth-led organizations that foster peaceful and inclusive societies by providing seed funding to projects chosen through a competitive selection process. It awards grants (up to USD 25,000), technical support, networking and capacity building opportunities to projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to intercultural or interfaith dialogue
    - [PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival](https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/) (a joint initiative with International Organization for Migration), empowers youth by providing them with an opportunity for expression and media self-representation through original and creative videos focusing on the PLURAL+ themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion. PLURAL+ is a platform that celebrates and disseminates the perspectives of young people on global and local issues. It thus aims to counter exacerbated feelings of isolation and marginalization through multimedia channels of global distribution.
    - The [Media and Information Literacy Clearinghouse](https://milunesco.unaoc.org/), developed in partnership with UNESCO, supports the global multi-language outreach of information and resources on media and information literacy. These resources are provided to educators who can include these topics in their formal and informal educational settings.
    - The [PEACEapp](https://www.unaoc.org/what-we-do/projects/peaceapp/) initiative makes use of ICT, gamified apps, and videogaming platforms as strategic ways of building peaceful understanding among individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds.
    - The [Fellowship Programme](https://fellowship.unaoc.org/about-the-fellowship/) fosters intercultural exchange and interfaith understanding by engaging with young civil society leaders and professionals from Europe, North-America (EUNA), the Middle East and North-Africa (MENA). Framed around two-week exchange trips between EUNA and MENA countries, the Programme sends participants from each geographic area to their counterparts’ region.

* **Information on  how youth organisations or youth-led structures are involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating policies and programmes on youth;**

* + Input is sought from UNAOC’s large network of youth beneficiaries when developing and implementing programmes and policies. As young people progress through UNAOC’s programmes and become alumni, they take on the role of collaborators rather than beneficiaries. For example, these alumni may be chosen as speakers at events, facilitators at workshops, or be involved in selection processes for UNAOC programmes.

* **Measures that can be taken at international level to facilitate/support the realisation of young people’s rights;**

* + Need for increased capacity building opportunities of young people, particularly around the issues of effective intercultural and interreligious dialogue, leadership and media literacy.
  + Need for increased participation in decision-making processes, including building capacity to effectively participate in these processes.
  + Need for increased partnership with young people, which includes funding of young people’s work and co-developing/co-implementing programs with youth-led organizations and networks.
  + Need for greater visibility of initiatives, actions and projects initiated by young people.