



# Review of Finland's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security

Final report

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**OSMA** advisory

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*The original version of this report has been prepared in Finnish. This English version has been translated with support from artificial intelligence.*



## Acronyms and abbreviations

AU	African Union
CMC	Crisis Management Centre Finland
CMI	Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation
CODEV-PI	Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships
COHOM	Working Party on Human Rights
FBA	Folke Bernadotte Academy
EU	European Union
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office, part of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)
POL-50	Unit for UN and General Global Affairs (at MFA Finland)
UN	United Nations
VANUPO	National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

## Executive Summary

In December 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 “Youth, Peace and Security,” which was the first resolution addressing meaningful participation of young people in peace, and security<sup>1</sup>. Finland is globally a pioneer in the Youth, Peace and Security agenda and, in 2021, became the first country in the world to publish a national Youth, Peace and Security action plan for the years 2021–2024<sup>2</sup>. The action plan was the result of collaboration between active young people and youth organizations, government authorities, research institutions, and civil society.

This review examines Finland’s work on Youth, Peace and Security during the first action plan period (2021–2024), including the preparation process of the national action plan and activities carried out in 2025 between the first and second action plan periods. The review covers Finland’s Youth, Peace and Security national action plan at both national and international levels.

The YPS agenda broadly addresses the role of young people in promoting peace and security. It portrays young people as active agents and resources with expertise and contributions to offer in developing and maintaining peaceful societies as part of decision-making. The goal of the YPS agenda is to increase security and well-being, build peace, and reduce the risk of war. The agenda creates a normative framework that provides effective tools to involve young people in issues of peace and security.

The objective of Finland’s first national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security was to serve as a tool and roadmap for implementing the UN Security Council resolution 2250. The priorities of the action plan followed the focus areas of this resolution including: (i) participation, (ii) protection, (iii) prevention, (iv) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and (v) partnerships. Intersectionality was a cross-cutting theme, and the implementation emphasized taking into account and addressing the impacts of structural discrimination.

Finland’s national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security has enjoyed strong political support. Both government authorities and civil society organizations have committed to its implementation. The action plan is coordinated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2250.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2250.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://um.fi/julkaisut/-/asset\\_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/nuoret-rauha-ja-turvallisuus-toimintaohjelma](https://um.fi/julkaisut/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/nuoret-rauha-ja-turvallisuus-toimintaohjelma)

Stakeholders implementing the national action plan have involved young people in their activities in Finland in various ways. Most government actors implement the action plan as part of their other activities without earmarked funding.

## **Implementation of the YPS action plan**

**Domestic stakeholders generally consider Finland's YPS national action plan useful.** The action plan serves as a framework for how Finland views YPS work and what its priorities are, and it helps mainstream the YPS agenda into stakeholders' own activities.

The drafting process and implementation of the action plan have increased awareness of the role of youth in peace and security work both within stakeholder organizations and more broadly. Especially among organizations, the national action plan has encouraged planning and implementing projects where the YPS theme is highlighted both in Finland and abroad.

**The role of youth in drafting and implementing Finland's YPS national action plan has been highly significant and, from an international perspective, exceptionally successful.** Authorities have also been extensively involved in drafting the YPS national action plan across administrative boundaries. Preparing the YPS action plan in cooperation between government and young people has made it credible.

Challenges remain in reaching young people from diverse backgrounds as part of YPS activities. A significant proportion of young people active in domestic YPS activities are university students, most of them women. Immigrants, cultural minorities, young men, those without higher education, and young people with disabilities are difficult to reach.

**The drafting process and implementation of Finland's YPS action plan are considered efficient given the circumstances.** However, limited resources emerge as a factor weakening the effectiveness of the work. In addition, the lack of indicators for the national action plan partly undermines the effectiveness of YPS work, especially regarding monitoring progress. Some interviewed authorities consider the time spent on YPS reporting excessive, as it involves reporting on activities carried out under other plans, frameworks and strategies.

**Best practices regarding the YPS national action plan include excellent cooperation between authorities and organizations and recognition of the importance of meaningful participation of youth and youth organizations in YPS activities.** Finland's YPS national action plan has been prepared

inclusively while listening to different actors and sharing ownership. In addition to traditional peace and security perspectives, the action plan also considers issues affecting everyday security.

Governments in office during the national action plan period have provided strong political support for its implementation. Finland's youth delegate program is considered successful and has been actively developed further. The YPS national action plan has improved understanding within different sectors of government about issues related to youth, peace, and security, particularly domestically. Finland also has good legislative examples of how young people are involved in societal development.

**Areas for improvement have also been identified in Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security.** In public administration, implementation of the national action plan is concentrated to ministries and partly in their subordinate agencies. Mainstreaming YPS activities within stakeholder organizations of the government has been limited, and expertise tends to be tied to individual people. Overlap between the national action plan and other public administration programs and strategies confuses stakeholders, and many actors implement the YPS agenda unknowingly. Very limited resources have been allocated for implementing the national action plan. Political objectives have become more prominent in Finland's YPS work during the preparation of the second national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security.

At the strategic level, Finland's YPS work lacks a situational analysis that could serve as a basis for strategy and action planning. Furthermore, the implementation of the national action plan's objectives, sub-objectives, and measures is not systematically monitored. The action plan also lacks indicators to track its impact.

Domestic activities under the national action plan have limited international dimensions, and outreach and communication about YPS work could be improved. Organizations have also noted that the commitment of young volunteers to participate in activities has weakened, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Internationally, Finland is seen as a pioneer, with both the will and the resources to advance YPS work.** The national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security has strengthened Finland's brand as a country emphasizing peace and security issues. It has also increased Finland's international visibility as a forerunner of an inclusive societal model where both women and young people have opportunities to participate and make their voices heard. Finland has actively created partnerships and brought together UN Member States, young people, and civil society organizations to advance the YPS agenda while successfully putting YPS principles into practice and making the agenda more tangible for international actors. Cooperation between Finnish authorities and youth is considered exemplary, and the support provided by the state to civil society is appreciated. Progressiveness in YPS work has opened doors for Finns in other areas of peacebuilding as

well. However, the potential of YPS activities has not been fully harnessed to promote Finland's public image internationally.

**In Finland's UN, foreign, and security policy advocacy, the national action plan has helped Finland stand out positively.** At the UN, Finland has positioned itself as a trailblazer in YPS work and has made YPS a theme of its OSCE Chairmanship in 2025. Finland has also profiled itself as a YPS powerhouse in Africa. Within the EU, Finland has promoted the YPS agenda particularly in the European External Action Service and in the field of civilian crisis management. Finland has also advanced the YPS agenda as part of its development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' role in coordinating YPS work adds credibility internationally. YPS activities have materialized, for example, during foreign ministers' trips and meetings where young people have been invited to join discussions. In peace mediation, the role of youth has been emphasized particularly in the work of the Ministry's Mediation Center and CMI (Crisis Management Initiative).

For both the government and civil society organizations, resource constraints have limited broader international promotion of YPS expertise. Finland has not positioned itself as a producer and distributor of YPS-related knowledge, nor has it fully utilized its strong network of YPS alumni.

**Finland has played a critical role in embedding the YPS agenda into the work of the UN.** Finland has succeeded in mainstreaming YPS thinking within the UN, and partly with Finland's support, the YPS agenda has evolved at the UN to recognize youth as a change maker and resource rather than a threat. Finland has revitalized the UN's YPS Group of Friends by serving as its co-chair. In addition, Finland has raised the visibility of civil society organizations working on YPS at the UN and supported with creating a home base within the UN for youth issues and the YPS agenda.

**YPS expertise can be leveraged in Finland's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council in various ways.** Finland has already promoted the YPS agenda in the Security Council by encouraging Council members to put the issue on the Council's agenda. Some UN actors and Member States would like Finland to advance the YPS agenda in the Security Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Finland's profile in YPS work can also be seen as an effective counterweight to global political polarization. The significance of Finland's role as an active promoter of the YPS agenda, particularly within UN circles, may grow further as the impact of young people on societal stability has come to the forefront in recent times in various countries, such as Nepal, Indonesia and Madagascar.

**The group of YPS actors can be expanded further.** Domestic YPS activities in Finland involve a wide range of actors from different ministries and youth organizations. To enhance impact, efforts could be made to involve other actors with strong links to YPS themes, but who are not part of Finland’s YPS monitoring group. Potential actors identified in this review include municipalities, particularly their youth services, youth centers, and outreach youth work, organizations for persons with disabilities, groups of immigrant youth, and the Conscript Union. It would also be worth considering involving other stakeholders such as mental health organizations, research institutions, universities, churches, and businesses. The police have previously participated in the YPS monitoring group, and their involvement could be beneficial in the future.

At the international level, stakeholders interviewed for this review hope that YPS work will attract a broader range of actors. These could include more political decision-makers, private companies, UN entities related to disarmament and peacekeeping, development cooperation actors, ministries, states, local governments, as well as international communities and development banks.

As part of the review, an examination of the best international practices allowed representatives of different countries and organizations to share their own good practices in advancing the YPS agenda. Key points included the positive impact of strengthening coordination between youth and authorities and of making YPS priorities more concrete to enhance the effectiveness of YPS activities. Additionally, the possibility of integrating YPS more closely with the Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan, while linking the national action plan more strongly to the tasks of local-level actors to achieve practical impacts was highlighted.

The conclusions and recommendations of the review are summarized in the following table.

Conclusion	Recommendation
<b>National level</b>	
<i>Finland has successfully included young people as active actors and as part of promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.</i>	<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>In implementing Finland’s national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, it is important to ensure that actions are not carried out only <i>for</i> young people, but that they are implemented and monitored in cooperation with youth and civil society organizations. YPS work should not be harnessed as a partisan political tool to avoid silencing young people’s voices.</p>

<p><i>Although Finnish youth participate actively in peace and security work, the profile of participating youth is fairly homogeneous, and many groups are underrepresented in the activities.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>Special attention should be directed toward hearing and involving underrepresented youth in YPS activities.</p>
<p><i>YPS work within the government is carried out across sectors and often as part of other programs and processes without a separate budget. However, developing and implementing this work domestically will continue to require resources.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b></p> <p>Resources for implementing the national action plan should be secured both within the government and civil society organizations.</p>
<p><i>The national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, is actively implemented by various stakeholders across sectors, but the achievement of different objectives and actions in the plan is not systematically monitored.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b></p> <p>A simple reporting template should be prepared for stakeholders implementing the national action plan, allowing them to indicate which actions listed in the plan they have carried out during the implementation period.</p>
<p><i>Measuring the impact of YPS work is not possible because the national action plan does not include defined indicators.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b></p> <p>Opportunities to utilize existing international indicator frameworks applicable to YPS work should be examined in the context of Finland’s YPS efforts.</p> <p>If resources are available, Finland’s national action plan could have its own indicators, but their development and monitoring should not significantly reduce resources available for implementing the national action plan.</p>
<p><i>Finnish YPS actors lack shared communication materials.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b></p>

	Common communication materials about Finland's YPS work and activities should be prepared for use by different stakeholders in an international context.
<i>Although Finland is a pioneer at many levels in involving youth in official processes and more broadly in society, best practices are not actively shared among different actors.</i>	<b>Recommendation 7:</b> A training program on best practices for youth participation in the YPS context could be developed for ministries, agencies, municipalities, organizations, and other interested parties. This training could also be marketed and sold to other potentially interested actors.
<i>Cooperation between civil society and the government has worked well, but there is still room for improvement, particularly in identifying synergies and in the timing of information requests directed at organizations.</i>	<b>Recommendation 8:</b> More time should be allowed for hearing youth perspectives and collecting information from youth organizations. Attention should also be paid to information exchange between organizations and authorities to ensure that cooperation opportunities are identified in time and to avoid overlapping actions.
<i>Finland's YPS work lacks a situational overview that could serve as a basis for the national action plan and for identifying strategic priorities.</i>	<b>Recommendation 9:</b> In the future, it would be useful to prepare a situational overview of Youth, Peace and Security themes that maps related trends and changes, operational needs, priorities, and relevant stakeholders. This overview should be used in drafting the next national action plan and in identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders.
<b>International level</b>	
<i>The future of the YPS agenda within the UN system is uncertain due to budget pressures and organizational reforms.</i>	<b>Recommendation 10:</b> Finland should maintain and continue its strong role as an advocate for YPS at the UN. Co-chairing the UN Member States' Group of Friends on YPS should continue, and resources should be allocated to ensure YPS themes are considered across UN organizations and activities. In addition to Finland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, experts seconded to the UN system could play a significant role in this as part of their duties.

<p><i>Youth organizations specializing in YPS activities in developing countries often have very limited resources to operate, while in some countries, efforts are made to restrict the activities of these organizations.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b></p> <p>Political support and resources directed by Finland to the international YPS context should increasingly target grassroots youth organizations in developing countries that promote the YPS agenda in their own countries, as well as maintaining and enhancing their operational capacity.</p>
<p><i>The YPS theme is relevant in many areas of international cooperation, but YPS perspectives are not yet comprehensively considered across different areas of international collaboration.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b></p> <p>The YPS dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting theme in various forms of international cooperation whenever relevant. A cross-cutting and mainstreamed approach would also enhance YPS promotion when there are no resources for separate YPS actions or projects.</p>
<p><i>International stakeholders regard Finland as a model country in YPS work and want to learn from Finnish YPS practices worldwide. However, Finland does not have a ready-made product to support, for example, the drafting of other countries' national action plans.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b></p> <p>Ways should be explored for Finland to actively offer its YPS expertise and best practices for use to other countries. Any potential training package or product should include both government and civil society expertise and could, where possible, be commercialized for interested actors.</p>
<p><i>Finland has done pioneering work in involving youth in international meetings and ministerial-level negotiations.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b></p> <p>Youth consultations in international meetings and negotiations should continue. Methods used for youth consultations at the Nordic-African Foreign Ministers' Meeting should be applied where possible in other similar meetings and events.</p>
<p><i>Through YPS, Finland's profile as a leader in peace and security issues could be further strengthened in view of its upcoming UN Security Council campaign.</i></p>	<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b></p> <p>Visibility of Finland's YPS work should be promoted even more, while actively offering support to countries interested in the YPS agenda for advancing national YPS work and possible national action plans. Finland could also foster cooperation among countries interested in YPS outside the UN by convening a YPS</p>

	<p>working group and organizing a high-level YPS-themed event as part of its Security Council campaign. Activating the role of a YPS Ambassador should also be considered as part of the campaign. Other recommendations presented above that promote Finland's international visibility in the YPS field (especially Recommendations 3, 6, 10, 12, and 13) also support Finland's Security Council campaign.</p>
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the Review

In December 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 “Youth, Peace and Security” (YPS). The resolution recognizes the positive role of youth in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. Subsequent Security Council resolutions 2419, 2535, and 2807 complement the Youth, Peace and Security framework by highlighting, among other things, practical ways to involve youth in peacebuilding efforts.

Finland is globally a pioneer in the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. In 2021, Finland became the first country in the world to publish a national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security covering years 2021–2024<sup>3</sup>. The action plan was the result of collaboration between active young people and youth organizations, government authorities, research institutions, and civil society.

The coordination of the action plan is the responsibility of the UN and General Global Affairs Unit (POL-50) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, supported by a monitoring group that includes relevant ministries and civil society organizations. The action plan is implemented in cooperation with the Youth, Peace and Security Network. This review fulfills the commitment outlined in Finland’s first national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security to prepare a final report at the end of the implementation period.

## 1.2 Purpose, Objectives, and Scope of the Review

This independent review draws on interim and final reports of the national action plan as well as stakeholder interviews. Its purpose is to provide an external perspective on the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of the national action plan’s implementation<sup>4</sup>. The review examines Finland’s Youth, Peace and Security work during the first national action plan period (2021–2024), including the preparation process and activities carried out in 2025 between the first and second national action plan periods. The review covers Finland’s national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security at both national and international levels.

The review focuses on 1) the relevance of the national action plan from the perspective of Finland’s foreign and security policy and any changes during the implementation period, 2) the effectiveness and added value

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<sup>3</sup> [https://um.fi/julkaisut/-/asset\\_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/nuoret-rauha-ja-turvallisuus-toimintaohjelma](https://um.fi/julkaisut/-/asset_publisher/TVOLgBmLyZvu/content/nuoret-rauha-ja-turvallisuus-toimintaohjelma)

<sup>4</sup> Väliraportti julkaistiin 2023 ja se on ladattavissa Eduskunnan sivuilta:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.parliament.fi/FI/vaski/Liiteasiakirja/Documents/EDK-2024-AK-430.pdf>. Loppuraporttia ei ole

of the national action plan, and 3) the relevance and efficiency of the drafting and monitoring process of the national action plan. Detailed evaluation questions are presented in Annex 1.

### 1.3 The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and Finland's National Action Plan

In December 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 “Youth, Peace and Security,” which was the first resolution addressing youth, peace, and security<sup>5</sup>. Subsequent Security Council resolutions 2419<sup>6</sup> (2018), 2535<sup>7</sup> (2020), and 2807<sup>8</sup> (2025) complement the Youth, Peace and Security framework by highlighting, among other things, practical ways to involve youth in peacebuilding efforts. Resolution 2535 stipulates that the UN Secretary-General reports to the Security Council on the implementation of the YPS agenda every two years.

The Youth, Peace, and Security agenda broadly addresses the role of youth in promoting peace and security. It portrays young people as active agents and resources with expertise and contributions to offer in developing and maintaining peaceful societies as part of decision-making. The goal of the YPS agenda is to increase security and well-being, build peace, and reduce the risk of war. The underlying idea is that all voices in society should be heard and that diverse perspectives should be treated equally without dismissing the experiences or ideas of young people. The agenda creates a normative framework that provides effective tools to involve youth in issues of peace and security.

The initiative for the resolution originally came from Jordan, but Finnish youth also played a significant role in its inception when the youth organization Allianssi (now Nuorisola) and Scouts of Finland proposed in 2011 to then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon that the UN Security Council would adopt a resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, which would bring the improvement of young people's participation opportunities onto the global agenda.

The UNSC resolution 2250 divides Youth, Peace and Security work into five priority areas:

i) participation, (ii) protection, (iii) prevention, (iv) disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and (v) partnerships.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2250.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2250.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2419.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2419.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2535\(2020\)\\_e.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2535(2020)_e.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16246.doc.htm>

Internationally, the promotion of the YPS agenda has mainly focused on developing and conflict-affected countries. Finland, however, has continued its work on the topic and published the world's first national action plan in 2021. Since then, national action plans have been published in ten countries worldwide, but Finland remains the only European country with a national action plan. Other European countries have also promoted the YPS agenda for example, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Sweden have funded YPS activities in various countries, and Italy is currently preparing its first national action plan.

The objective of Finland's first national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security was to serve as a tool and roadmap for implementing UN Security Council resolution 2250. The priorities of the national action plan followed the focus areas of this resolution. Intersectionality was a cross-cutting theme, and the implementation emphasized taking into account and addressing the impacts of structural discrimination.

Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security has enjoyed strong political support. The drafting and renewal of the national action plan have been included in the government's foreign and security policy reports in 2020 and 2024, as well as in the 2019 government program since its publication. Both government authorities (including the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior and Crisis Management Centre, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of the Environment) and civil society organizations (including Nuorisola, the Youth, Peace and Security Network, Guides and Scouts of Finland, Finn Church Aid, Finnish Youth Councils Association, UN Association of Finland, UN Youth, CMI, YMCA, Finnish Mission Society, and DEMO ry) have committed to its implementation.

The national action plan is coordinated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which works in close collaboration with the Youth, Peace, and Security Network to actively implement the national action plan. The network's annually appointed steering group provides strategic direction for its work. Since 2021, Nuorisola has been responsible for the Youth, Peace, and Security Network's secretariat functions. Additionally, YPS work is monitored and overseen by a monitoring group composed of stakeholders committed to the national action plan, mainly ministries and civil society organizations. The monitoring group meets under the leadership of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs two to three times a year, and its meetings address the progress of the national action plan.

Stakeholders of the national action plan have engaged young people in their activities in Finland in various ways. As an example, ministries have conducted youth surveys and established youth panels to support their decision-making and legislative work, offered university internship positions, mentoring programs, and

opportunities to participate in participatory budgeting and steering groups. In addition, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment have offered youth delegate positions for international meetings (e.g., climate negotiations and UN General Assembly sessions), and the Minister for Foreign Affairs has appointed a Special Representative for Youth, Peace and Security for Finland's OSCE Chairmanship. Civil society organizations, in turn, have engaged youth in peace and security-related work through various events and campaigns, by developing projects related to the theme both domestically and internationally, and by channeling opportunities for youth to participate in government work.

Most government actors implement the national action plan as part of their other activities without earmarked funding. Many YPS measures are originally part of other programs or strategies, such as the National Youth Work and Policy Program (VANUPO) or the Child Strategy.

Internationally, Finland has promoted the YPS agenda as part of its national action plan by actively advancing YPS themes at the UN, within UN agencies, and among UN member states; funding YPS-related projects implemented by the UN in developing countries; providing assistance to other countries in preparing national action plans; organizing dialogue sessions between youth and ministers at international ministerial meetings; hosting international seminars and workshops; and funding experts in UN offices and organizations. Finland has also promoted the YPS agenda within the EU and OSCE, and discussions have taken place with NATO. In addition, Finland has funded international civil society organizations that advance the YPS agenda globally and in various countries.

## 2. Methodology

The source material for the review was collected through a literature review, stakeholder interviews, and an online survey mapping good practices from other countries.

The literature review was based on Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security for 2021–2024, the mid-term implementation report from 2023, action reports submitted by implementing actors to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2025, and the final report prepared in 2025 in parallel with this review. In addition, the literature review utilized UN Resolutions 2250, 2419, and 2535, preparatory materials for Finland's national action plan, the UN Secretary-General's reports on Youth, Peace and Security, and other relevant documents.

Stakeholder interviews covered a wide range of actors implementing the YPS agenda in Finland (22 organizations) as well as international actors and partners who have followed Finland's YPS activities (12 organizations). As part of the good practices review, an online survey was conducted, reaching experts from

eight countries and interviewing YPS specialists from three different countries and the African Union. All interviewed organizations are listed in Annex 2. In interviews with international actors, care was taken to avoid situations where the interviewer and interviewee were already acquainted. Based on the analysis of the source material, this Finnish-language report was prepared and subsequently translated into English.

The review is primarily based on qualitative analysis. No indicators have been developed for Finland's YPS action plan, and due to resource constraints, the implementation of actions listed in the plan has not been systematically monitored. Guided by the evaluation questions, the review focuses on examining the added value of Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, its drafting and monitoring processes, as well as best practices and areas for improvement in Finland, along with the international visibility of the national action plan and its use in Finland's UN, foreign, and security policy advocacy.

### 3. Findings on the Implementation of Finland's National Action Plan

#### 3.1 Implementation of the National Action Plan in Finland

##### 3.1.1 Added Value of the National Action Plan for Domestic Actors

**Domestic stakeholders generally consider Finland's national action plan useful.** The action plan provides a natural and multi-sectoral framework, political backing, and leverage for involving youth and advancing their issues under themes of peace and security.

**For stakeholders, it is important that the governments in office during the national action plan period have been committed to its implementation.** The existence of the action plan is a concrete example that YPS matters to Finland and serves as a model for others. Through the national action plan, different government bodies recognize and acknowledge the role of youth in society and its development and demonstrate their commitment to YPS work to other stakeholders, such as organizations. The credibility of the document is strengthened by the fact that it is a product of the Government of Finland and was prepared together with young people. The national action plan also helps stakeholders understand the significance of individual actions as part of a broader whole.

**The national action plan serves as a framework for how Finland views YPS work and what its priorities are.** The objectives, sub-objectives, and actions recorded in the national action plan guide stakeholders in focusing their own YPS efforts. The action plan brings people and organizations together around a phenomenon-based approach. It is also an excellent example of multi-stakeholder cooperation, where authorities and civil society work closely together, complementing each other.

**Drafting the world's first national YPS action plan has made Finland a major player in YPS.**

Stakeholders consider it appropriate that Finland has its own national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security. Being the first country to have a national action plan has opened doors for Finnish peacebuilders, organizations, and other actors internationally. The action plan has also benefited Finland's foreign relations and image, as its pioneering role has helped Finland stand out on international platforms, particularly at the UN and, especially in the early years of the plan, also in the EU. The national action plan and its publicity serve as Finland's calling card in the international context.

**The national action plan helps mainstream the YPS agenda into stakeholders' activities.** For government actors, the national action plan is binding, meaning that actions recorded in it must be carried out. It facilitates progress within organizations. Without the action plan, it would be harder to keep these issues visible both internally and externally. The action plan brings together different government organizations and gives recognition to actors that might not easily be associated with YPS themes but are involved in implementing the plan. Some civil society organizations, such as CMI and YMCA, have also integrated the YPS agenda into their own strategies.

**The drafting process and implementation of the national action plan have increased awareness of the role of youth in peace and security work both within stakeholder organizations and more broadly.** The national action plan helps coordinate work among different actors and consolidates activities already taking place in the field.

**Stakeholders primarily focused on YPS work consider it important to have a national action plan to rely on and to which they are committed.** The national action plan and related funding enable youth to participate in promoting peace and security much more actively than would be possible without the action plan.

**Especially among organizations, the national action plan has encouraged planning and implementing projects where the YPS theme is highlighted both in Finland and abroad.** Long-term commitment to the action plan has also brought visibility to organizations.

**The second, forthcoming national action plan is considered necessary, but its level of progressiveness raises questions among stakeholders.** Many perceive the revised draft as describing current YPS activities rather than setting concrete goals for developing the work.

**For some interviewed actors, the national action plan has not provided significant benefits.** Many of the actions indicated that the action plan would be implemented anyway because its content is part of other strategies and programs, such as the Child Strategy or VANUPO. Individual interviewees view the national action plan as an internal exercise within government that does not benefit other actors.

### 3.1.2 Development and Monitoring Processes of the National Action Plan Youth Participation and Inclusiveness

**The role of youth in drafting and implementing Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security has been highly significant and, from an international perspective, exceptionally successful.** UN Resolution 2250 originated from an initiative by Finnish youth, and young people have also actively participated in the planning and implementation of the national action plan.

**Finland's first national action plan was developed through joint efforts by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the youth sector organization Allianssi (previously Nuorisola).** The drafting process of the national action plan was designed together with youth. The objectives and actions of the plan were prepared collaboratively with youth organizations and individual young people in thematic workshops organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which were held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, youth organizations conducted surveys among their members regarding the objectives of the national action plan. Through these organizations, young people also contributed to drafting the final text of the action plan.

**Interviewed stakeholders, both in Finland and internationally, praised the involvement of youth in various stages of planning and preparing the action plan.** Youth organizations (e.g., Allianssi, YMCA, Scouts of Finland, and UN Youth Association of Finland) played a significant role in shaping the content of the national action plan, and individual young people not affiliated with organizations also had opportunities to participate in consultation sessions. Although efforts were made to keep the threshold for participation as low as possible, active involvement still required some prior knowledge of the topic to engage meaningfully in discussions. According to organizations, there are plenty of opportunities for youth to participate, but it still requires initiative from the young person to become an active actor and find their place in YPS activities.

**Young people from diverse backgrounds or belonging to minorities were not necessarily reached, and their views were not comprehensively heard during the drafting or implementation of the national action plan.** During the planning phase, surveys and consultations primarily reached members of

organizations, but less so those who are not active in organizational activities. Therefore, the planning process was not fully inclusive, even though efforts were made to reach youth through multiple channels.

A significant proportion of young people active in domestic YPS activities are university students, most of them young women. Immigrants, cultural minorities, young men, those without higher education, and young people with disabilities are rarely heard. Many youth organizations have developed ways to reach underrepresented youth in their own activities, but these efforts are usually not directly linked to YPS work. Specific YPS measures aimed at reaching underrepresented youth are limited by resource constraints. For example, YMCA has succeeded in reaching some youth through surveys who would not otherwise have engaged in YPS work. The low representation of young people with disabilities in YPS work is particularly noteworthy because promoting the participation of persons with disabilities is explicitly mentioned several times in Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, both in domestic and international contexts. However, disability organizations are not represented among the most active organizations in Finland's YPS work.

**Authorities have been extensively involved in drafting the national action plan across administrative boundaries.** A few interviewees highlighted the potential role of the police in YPS work. In addition, municipal-level staff are needed in YPS activities, for example through youth work. More detailed recommendations on potentially missing actors are discussed in Section 5.

**The voice of youth was strongly present in drafting the first national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security.** Stakeholders believe the document was genuinely prepared together with young people. The second, revised national action plan in 2025 is perceived as having been more influenced by political steering from governing parties.

**Drafting the national action plan in cooperation between government and young people has made it credible.** At the same time, the active involvement of youth in preparing the national action plan is seen as having facilitated their participation in other government processes. Thanks to YPS processes that have created opportunities for young people to engage with government counterparts many government bodies now recognize the importance of involving youth and consulting them in other strategic processes as well.

### **Efficiency**

**The drafting process and implementation of Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security are considered sufficiently efficient** while providing opportunities for both various authorities,

particularly at the ministerial level, and youth themselves to participate in the processes of Finland's national action plan.

**Those involved in planning the national action plan did not consider the process particularly burdensome or inefficient.** The pillar-specific workshops, organized virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enabled youth participation regardless of geographical location.

**Stakeholders of the national action plan meet two to three times a year in monitoring group meetings coordinated by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.** The monitoring group has discussed the progress of Finland's national YPS work and exchanged ideas and experiences of YPS activities across different organizations. Many stakeholder representatives report that they do not always have time to attend meetings, but they appreciate that the opportunity to participate is offered. On the other hand, some interviewees hope that the work of the monitoring group could be developed so that, for example, there would be more time to hear about YPS activities in different sectoral ministries and to engage in broader discussions about YPS work and develop practices among members beyond merely reporting on completed actions. Interviewees also expressed a desire for a forum for experts who wish to engage in deeper discussions about good practices, lessons learned, and news related to advancing YPS efforts. Remote meetings of the monitoring group are considered efficient in terms of time management, but some interviewees believe that in-person meetings could be more beneficial for advancing issues.

In addition to the monitoring group, the UN and Global Affairs Unit (POL-50) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has organized regular coordination and information exchange meetings with MFA officials responsible for the YPS agenda, coordinators of the Youth, Peace and Security Network, and network chairs three to four times a year. Both the Ministry and the Network consider these meetings useful and an effective way to monitor the progress of YPS work across different actors.

**Stakeholders regard the coordination work carried out by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as efficient and functional, despite very limited resources, although there is room for improvement.**

Both government and civil society stakeholders hope that more time could be allowed for responding to information requests. Most officials handle YPS reporting alongside other duties, meaning resources and timelines for YPS are tight. The problem of tight deadlines is particularly pronounced among youth organizations, where most work is done on a voluntary basis. Activating volunteers takes time because people usually have day jobs, and YPS-related tasks cannot be expected to be completed during working hours.

Stakeholders also expressed a desire for slightly more resources for communication to make information exchange smoother.

**From a reporting perspective, reliance on the YPS agenda pillars is considered a factor that reduces efficiency.** The pillars contain many overlapping themes and actions, and reporting on them multiple times feels unnecessary. For example, actions related to prevention and protection are often very similar. In addition, the objectives and actions set out in the national action plan are partly unclear to stakeholders, which slows down or prevents their implementation.

**Resource constraints emerge as a factor weakening the efficiency of the work.** Due to lack of resources, YPS coordination is reactive, the monitoring group meets less frequently than needed, and not all relevant requests can be addressed. Efforts are made to respond to emerging information needs, but there is no time to proactively advance the YPS agenda, even though Finland has expertise and contributions to offer internationally. For example, YPS work directed toward the EU has had to be deprioritized to allocate resources for work with the OSCE and the UN. Organizations also must prioritize their tasks strictly due to resource shortages.

**The lack of indicators in the national action plan further undermines the efficiency of YPS work, particularly in monitoring progress.** Without indicators and target levels, the achievement of the national action plan's objectives cannot be measured. Due to resource constraints, the current monitoring system also suffers from a lack of standardized reporting practices, which means that the implementation and impact of the objectives and actions set out in the action plan are not systematically tracked, and it is therefore unclear which objectives have received less attention.

**Some interviewed authorities consider the time spent on YPS reporting excessive because it involves reporting on actions carried out under other frameworks/plans and strategies.** Since no dedicated funding is allocated for YPS work in sectoral ministries, the time spent on reporting can sometimes feel frustrating because the actions reported under the YPS agenda would be implemented anyway. Reporting systems in many administrative sectors do not follow the structure of the national action plan, so reporting often must be prepared multiple times.

**Within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, coordination of YPS work has been concentrated around a single expert,** and stakeholders are concerned about how coordination will proceed when that person changes roles. Interviewed stakeholders also wonder whether domestic YPS work should be coordinated by

ministries focused on domestic issues, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, or the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

**No comprehensive communication materials have been prepared on Finland's YPS work that different actors could use in their own channels.** The lack of shared materials increases the time spent on YPS communication within organizations and, on the other hand, reduces the number of events that actors have time to attend.

### 3.1.3 Best Practices and Areas for Improvement in YPS Work in Finland

#### Best Practices

**Cooperation between authorities and organizations works exceptionally well in YPS efforts, based on mutual partnership.** There is deep trust between young people and government authorities; they listen carefully to each other's ideas and strive to take them into account in their work on both sides. During the national action plan period under review, youth and authorities have sat at the same tables to discuss and learn from each other across sectors without hierarchical barriers that would hinder collaboration. Both authorities from different fields and youth organizations are satisfied with the outcomes of this cooperation. The division of roles is clear and functional.

**The importance of young people and youth organizations has been recognized, and their activities and participation are supported in various ways.** Organizations are provided with funding, and their views are requested and heard. Public administration allows organizations to operate freely and focus on issues they consider important, without interference or steering of their activities.

**The national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security has improved understanding within different sectors of government about issues related to youth, peace, and security, particularly domestically.** The work has succeeded to some extent in mainstreaming YPS thinking within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and has enhanced sectoral ministries' understanding of the cross-cutting nature of the theme across sectors. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has integrated YPS work into areas such as arms control. Even the police, which is currently not part of the monitoring group, has recognized the value of investing in cooperation with young people.

**Finland has good legislative examples of how youth are involved in societal development.** For instance, youth councils were included in the Municipal Act in 2015, meaning that every municipality should have a youth council. Additionally, since 2023, all wellbeing regions have been required to have a regional youth council.

**Coordination and cooperation between the Youth, Peace and Security Network and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs work well.** Communication is smooth and straightforward, and youth find ministry officials approachable. Young people feel they can maintain their own identity when engaging in discussions and cooperation with the Ministry. The network enables young people to share genuine ownership of YPS work.

**The drafting of Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security has been carried out inclusively, listening to different actors and sharing ownership.** The process of preparing the first national action plan, its cross-sectoral nature, and the strong ownership by youth in its development strengthen Finland's brand as a major player in Youth, Peace and Security.

**Efforts have been made to consider youth diversity in drafting and implementing the national action plan.** Young people from different backgrounds and minorities have been sought and encouraged to make their voices heard, for example, through the assistance of youth organizations. Attention has also been paid to geographical coverage, for instance, by consulting youth councils and through organizational cooperation.

**The youth delegate program is considered successful and has been actively developed further.** Nuorisola has participated in delegate recruitment, and delegates have been selected from among young people who actively sought these positions. Delegates have been actively involved in international meeting delegations and have received training for their roles. Some youth delegates have been able to propose items for international meeting agendas, deliver speeches at meetings, and their views have been considered in forming Finland's positions. Finnish youth delegates serve as an example to other countries of how to expand youth participation opportunities.

**Governments in office during the national action plan period have provided strong political support for its implementation.** The drafting and later revision of the national action plan have been included in the government programs of 2019 and 2023, and the national action plan has also been mentioned in Finland's foreign and security policy reports in 2020 and 2024. Some foreign ministers have actively sought to meet and hear youth both in Finland and internationally.

**In addition to traditional peace and security perspectives, the national action plan also considers issues affecting everyday security.** Stakeholders value the inclusion of measures to combat social inequality, racism, and discrimination as part of Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security.

**Various approaches have been tested under the national action plan to explore how government can contribute to building youth capacity in peace work.** Examples include the youth peace mediator mentoring program between Finland and South Africa, speaker pools, and the availability of MFA officials as speakers at youth events, all of which promote interest in and learning about peace work in Finland and internationally.

**Finland's YPS monitoring group functions well given the resources available.** The group provides experts from different sectors with an opportunity to share ideas and learn from other members. Many officials from sectoral ministries also appreciate how the monitoring group offers insight into the work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which often remains unfamiliar in other circumstances.

**For Finnish actors working in crisis areas, the YPS agenda serves as an operational tool** that helps make youth-related work concrete and assists in identifying different groups and networks that can provide information and serve as targets for advocacy efforts.

### **Areas for Improvement**

**Mainstreaming YPS work within government stakeholder organizations has been limited, and expertise tends to be concentrated on individual people.** When responsible people change, continuing cooperation with other actors such as civil society organizations is often difficult until practices are re-established. Mainstreaming YPS activities across ministries, embassies, and other government bodies would facilitate continuity and improve efficiency. Currently, many officials who practically carry out tasks related to the YPS agenda have never heard of Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security.

**In public administration, implementation of the national action plan is concentrated in ministries and partly in their subordinate agencies.** A YPS Friends Group was established in the Finnish Parliament in 2024 to cooperate particularly with the Youth, Peace and Security Network and keep the theme visible in parliamentary work. However, in other government decision-making systems, at regional or municipal levels, there are no dedicated channels for YPS work.

Consideration of YPS themes in municipalities, for example through youth work and schools, remains unclear, even though municipal actors practically implement many YPS-related actions as part of their normal work. Curricula broadly address issues such as global education and peace, but teachers' work is not perceived as part of YPS activities. Stakeholders are concerned that the nationally implemented action plan does not truly reach the realities of young people's lives and issues. Interviewees hope that national YPS work will be brought closer to youth and real-life phenomena, beyond ministries and agencies.

**Many actors implement the YPS agenda unknowingly.** Awareness of YPS has not spread widely within government. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has organized related training, but according to interviewed officials, both there and in many other organizations, some experts work on YPS-relevant issues under other headings without recognizing their relevance to the YPS agenda. As a result, potential synergies between actors cannot be fully utilized. For example, development cooperation, Solidarity Corps under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Finnish Defence Forces carry out many actions relevant to YPS that are not perceived as part of the national action plan. Potential cooperation is not developed as strategically as it could be.

**Despite efforts to ensure broad youth participation, the group of young people involved in YPS work remains fairly homogeneous.** The voices of boys and young men, immigrants, cultural minorities, persons with disabilities, those outside education, and many other often disadvantaged youths are rarely heard in YPS work. Stakeholders are concerned that, for example, young people at risk of radicalization are not reached or involved, even though YPS could provide an important framework for them. Stakeholders have limited means to reach youth who are not engaged in or following organizational activities. Meanwhile, municipal youth services, outreach youth work, churches, or the police have not been actively involved in YPS work.

**Very limited resources have been allocated for implementing the national action plan.** The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has minimal staff resources for coordinating the national action plan, and other ministries have no earmarked funding for YPS work. Youth organizations receive grants from, for example, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which they can partly use for YPS work, but resources are insufficient to implement all desired activities. Funding uncertainty prevents organizations from pursuing long-term actions under the YPS agenda, and many actions requested by government remain unimplemented due to resource shortages. Similarly, lack of funding within government has prevented full implementation of some actions in the national action plan. On the other hand, many actions in the action plan are implemented within government as part of other strategies and programs funded from different sources, so separate funding is not always needed.

**Finland's YPS work lacks a situational overview that could serve as a basis for strategy and action planning.** In peace and security matters, strategy and action plans are usually based on a shared situational picture. Stakeholders believe that drafting the national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security should also be based on a YPS situational overview mapping which issues are rising or declining, what factors influence them, what needs to be done, and who should participate. Based on this overview, a strategic-operational

national action plan could be built, making joint conclusions and determining at different levels what needs to be done to achieve objectives.

**Youth participation in national discussions on youth, peace, and security has been relatively successful, but youth are not yet systematically consulted in broader security policy.** Stakeholders hope that the voices of youth from diverse backgrounds will also be heard in security policy so that challenges and opportunities identified by youth can be addressed in time.

**Implementation of the national action plan's objectives, sub-objectives, and actions is not systematically monitored.** Due to the lack of systematic monitoring, it is impossible during or at the end of the implementation period to determine which planned actions have been carried out, which have been attempted, and which have not been implemented at all. Monitoring actions would not require indicators but could be based on existing action plans. Indicators, however, would allow tracking not only implementation but also impact.

**The national action plan lacks indicators to monitor the achievement of its objectives.** Indicators were initially planned but were not finalized or adopted due to resource constraints. Stakeholders feel that indicators are needed to measure the development and impact of the national action plan objectively, which would help different actors take the work seriously and allocate resources. Some stakeholders hope that indicators would be similar to those used in the Women, Peace and Security national action plan. International stakeholders also raised the possibility of using international indicators. Many interviewees are concerned about the balance between the usefulness of indicators and the resources required to develop and monitor them.

**Overlap between the national action plan and other government programs and strategies confuses stakeholders.** Synergies between programs are not necessarily considered thoroughly; instead, actions are mainly reported under different programs.

**Political objectives have become more prominent in Finland's YPS work than before.** Many organizations feel that they were previously trusted more, but particularly during the preparation of the second national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, political parties have strongly influenced the content and wording of the action plan.

**Domestic actions under the national action plan have limited international dimensions.** Stakeholders consider the strength, and at the same time the weakness, of the national action plan's implementation to be that domestic actions are quite far removed from traditional peace work. Because the concept of peace in the

national action plan is broad, the plan's actions easily overlap with other strategies and programs. Several interviewed authorities note that the national action plan addresses Finland's role globally only to a limited extent, while encouraging youth to engage in international peace work tends to be confined to the activities of youth delegates and the international work carried out by the Youth, Peace and Security Network and organizations. Stakeholders would like to see more encouragement for young people to pursue international positions and careers in peace and security. For example, there are no Finnish youth in the OSCE Youth Experts Group, even though Finland actively promotes the inclusion of youth perspectives in OSCE activities.

**Communication in YPS work has room for improvement.** Due to resource constraints, communication within the monitoring group (coordinated by the MFA) mainly consists of updating actions taken by each organization. External communication lacks materials that different actors could use in their own work.

**The commitment of volunteer youth to activities is perceived to have weakened, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic.** Organizations find it increasingly difficult to engage young people and ensure their participation in agreed meetings. Reduced commitment among young people has decreased the number of youths involved in YPS work. For example, within the Youth, Peace and Security Network, activities have been concentrated in the network's steering group because member engagement has been weaker than before. At the same time, stakeholders following the network's activities hope that the work will not be run by too small of a group and that network members will be more actively included in activities.

## 3.2 Finland's YPS Action Plan: International Visibility and Utilization

### 3.2.1 The YPS Action Plan in Finland's Global Public Image

**Finland is seen internationally as a pioneer with the will and resources to advance YPS work.** The national action plan has strengthened Finland's brand as a country emphasizing peace and security issues. It has also increased Finland's global recognition as a forerunner of an inclusive societal model where both women and youth have opportunities to participate and make their voices heard. Finland has actively built partnerships and proactively brought together UN Member States, youth, and civil society organizations to advance the YPS agenda while successfully putting YPS principles into practice. The UN Secretary-General has acknowledged Finland's pioneering role by highlighting Finnish examples in all three Youth, Peace and Security reports submitted to the UN Security Council.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the YPS agenda is not highly

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<sup>9</sup> Raportit ovat ladattavissa YK:n sivuilta: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_2020\\_167\\_e.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2020_167_e.pdf)

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n22/289/84/pdf/n2228984.pdf?OpenElement>

competitive internationally, making it easier for Finland to stand out through strong political commitment and strategic allocation of limited resources for impactful actions.

**Finland has positioned itself in YPS by supporting other countries in drafting national action plans.**

Finland has shared good YPS practices and experiences with various countries and organizations in different contexts. In autumn 2022, Finland organized an international workshop in Helsinki focused on good YPS practices, aiming to encourage African countries in particular to develop national Youth, Peace and Security national action plans and to create conditions and frameworks for YPS cooperation between ministries and young peacebuilders from different countries. The workshop laid the foundation for Finland's initiative to establish a YPS-themed Community of Practice, bringing together UN Member States and their youth organizations and other actors interested in YPS work. The community's goal is to exchange information and best practices on developing national Youth, Peace and Security national action plans. Finland coordinates the community's activities together with Search for Common Ground and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders.

**Finland's national action plan serves as an example for other countries, but its potential has not been fully utilized to promote Finland's public image.**

When published, Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security was the first of its kind globally. It demonstrated that drafting such an action plan in cooperation with young people is possible and that YPS is not only relevant for developing countries but also beneficial in peaceful societies. Interviewed stakeholders believe Finland could leverage its expertise more proactively by sharing its experiences and knowledge more widely and visibly, particularly regarding different methods of meaningful youth participation.

**Progressiveness in YPS work has opened doors for Finnish actors in other areas of peacebuilding.**

Finnish organizations feel they have received support and funding for their broader international peace work because Finland has established a strong YPS profile.

**Cooperation between Finnish authorities and youth is considered exemplary.**

Drafting the national action plan in close collaboration with youth attracts interest from other countries. In Finland, young people have been given opportunities to influence, and internationally it is recognized that youth voices are heard in Finland. The Youth, Peace and Security Network has promoted this message globally, while Finland's youth delegate program is highly valued and seen as a model for how youth can be heard in international

negotiations. Finnish youth have also made their voices heard on international platforms such as the UN, EU, and OSCE.

**Finland's strong relationships and support for civil society are widely appreciated.** Civil society plays a significant role in monitoring and promoting state actions. Finland has supported international civil society organizations and networks in developing YPS work, thereby strengthening civil society's role and capacity to advance the YPS agenda. At the same time, civil society hopes that grassroots organizations will receive more support for their activities to promote YPS issues, particularly in developing countries.

**Finland was among the first countries to fund a position dedicated to YPS work within an UN entity.** Globally, there are few experts focusing exclusively on YPS; most positions also cover other themes. Finland's secondments on YPS, particularly to the UN, have attracted positive attention and supported the institutionalization of the YPS agenda at UN headquarters level. Finland's expertise on the topic within its Permanent Mission to the United Nations is also highly praised.

**The Helsinki Symposium and the Community of Practice organized by Finland have helped make the YPS agenda tangible.** The Helsinki Symposium, held in 2019, contributed to concretizing youth participation in peace processes and helped the international community take youth perspectives seriously. The event convened young people interested in peace processes, international experts, organizations and Member States, fostering trust among actors and accelerating ongoing efforts to strengthen the role of youth in peace processes. The event also published a policy paper on youth participation in peace processes<sup>10</sup>, which compiled and analyzed good practices and provided concrete recommendations for advancing inclusion of young people in peace processes. Following the Helsinki symposium, Finland has continued close cooperation with Qatar and Colombia to advance youth participation in peace processes. Finland's support for Search for Common Ground and the YPS Community of Practice has also helped strengthen collaboration among actors and build an international and intergenerational YPS community.

### 3.2.2 Utilization of the National Action Plan in Finland's UN, Foreign, and Security Policy Advocacy

**Finland has positioned itself at the UN as a trailblazer in YPS work.** Finland has supported the UN in integrating YPS into the operations of UN headquarters and UN agencies. Finland also co-chairs, together

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<sup>10</sup> Global policy paper "We Are Here: An integrated approach to youth-inclusive peace processes" on luettavissa täällä: <https://www.youth4peace.info/book-page/global-policy-paper-we-are-here-integrated-approach-youth-inclusive-peace-processes>

with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the YPS Group of Friends composed of Member States. In addition, Finland's Permanent Mission to the UN has organized YPS related events, and Finland has brought youth representatives to UN meetings. In the UN context, Finland appears as a proactive actor assuming global responsibility and supporting international peace and security efforts.

**Finland has made YPS a theme of its OSCE Chairmanship in 2025.** The OSCE Youth Forum organized by Finland in July 2025 brought together youth from around fifty OSCE participating states to discuss regional security challenges and provide recommendations for drafting Finland's YPS roadmap for the OSCE. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Elina Valtonen, appointed a Special Representative for Youth, Peace and Security for the OSCE Chairmanship to represent Finland in international OSCE meetings. During Finland's chairmanship, the first YPS roadmap for the OSCE was developed. Thanks to its active role, Finland is seen within the OSCE as a leading actor in Youth, Peace and Security, and this profile has helped build connections with some OSCE Member States.

**Finland has also established itself as a major YPS player in Africa.** Finland has cooperated with the African Union (AU) and developed a youth peace mediator mentoring program with South Africa. In addition, the Youth, Peace, and Security Network and civil society organizations such as Finn Church Aid and YMCA have promoted YPS work and the drafting of national action plans in several African countries. Finnish embassies have also supported YPS processes, for example in Nigeria and Kenya.

**Within the EU, Finland has promoted the YPS agenda particularly in the European External Action Service and in the field of civilian crisis management.** The Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU has sought to include references to Youth, Peace and Security and youth participation in the conclusions of the Council of the European Union's Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships (CODEV-PI) and the Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM). Through its EU Mission, Finland has also promoted the inclusion of the YPS agenda in documents guiding EU civilian crisis management and in civilian crisis management operations. The Crisis Management Centre (CMC) played a role in drafting the mini concept completed in 2024 to guide the integration of YPS into civilian crisis management within the EU Civilian Crisis Management Committee. In addition, CMC has trained experts deployed to civilian crisis management operations on YPS themes as part of its basic course on civilian crisis management. Among civil society actors, the Youth, Peace and Security Network and UN Youth Association of Finland have supported the work of the EU YPS Coalition and contributed to mainstreaming YPS themes within the EU. EU delegations have established youth consultation groups in their host countries, which also

address YPS issues, but Finland has not been actively involved in these. Due to resource constraints, Finland has also not been particularly active in internal EU discussions on YPS.

**Finland has advanced the YPS agenda as part of its development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.** In humanitarian crises, Finland emphasizes assistance to the most vulnerable groups. In development cooperation, the YPS perspective is maintained by funding projects and programs related to youth, peace, and security implemented by civil society organizations and development funds, and by ensuring youth participation in bilateral development cooperation projects.

**Foreign ministers have met youth during their trips.** In particular, former Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto leveraged his position to showcase Finland's YPS expertise by inviting youth to join meetings. For example, at the Nordic-African Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by Finland, youth from different countries challenged their ministers, and since then, youth consultations have become a tradition continued in subsequent meetings.

**The inclusion of youth in peace mediation has been emphasized particularly in the work of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Mediation Center and CMI.** The MFA Mediation Center has mainstreamed youth participation in mediation and peace processes, for example through the international youth peace mediator mentoring program launched in June 2025 in cooperation between Finland and South Africa. The conflict resolution organization CMI has included youth and peace work as a priority area in its new 10-year strategy adopted in 2025 and previously focused on youth participation in peace processes, particularly in African countries such as Chad and Libya.

**Resource constraints within government and organizations have prevented broader international promotion of YPS expertise.** Requests to present Finland's expertise and practices far exceed the capacity of actors to respond. Limited resources have also been available for strategic planning to integrate YPS work into foreign and security policy advocacy.

**The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' role in coordinating YPS work adds credibility internationally.** In many countries, YPS falls under the administration of youth ministries. In Finland, the theme has been integrated into foreign relations, and youth have been visibly included in representing Finland internationally. Finland's approach to implementing the national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security through cooperation across different administrative sectors and ministries has also attracted interest in other countries.

**Finland has not positioned itself as a producer and distributor of YPS-related knowledge.** Finland and Finnish expertise are trusted internationally, but Finland has not actively shared its knowledge. Sweden's Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) has produced numerous YPS-related reports that have included interviews with Finnish experts, but Finland has focused its YPS efforts on building and strengthening networks and partnerships rather than on knowledge production.

**Finland has a strong pool of YPS alumni.** Finland has funded the work of Finnish YPS experts at UN headquarters and in UN Volunteer positions, and many professionals in organizations have grown into YPS specialists. However, communication among these experts has not been systematically coordinated.

### 3.2.3 Finland's Role in Embedding the YPS Agenda within the UN

**Finland has played a critical role in establishing the YPS agenda.** Finnish youth were involved in the initiative that led to the drafting of the first UN Security Council YPS resolution 2250.

**The UN's YPS agenda has evolved, partly with Finland's support, to recognize youth as an agent of change and resource rather than a threat.** Finland's national action plan demonstrated that YPS work can and should be carried out under youth leadership in cooperation with authorities. YPS has grown into a shared agenda for the Global South and North, recognizing that youth exist everywhere and that there are challenges everywhere to which youth can contribute solutions.

**Finland has revitalized the work of the (New York based) Member State YPS Group of Friends.**

Finland became the group's vice-chair alongside the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 2024. Finland's role is considered significant in the international coordination of the YPS agenda, in activating the group's work, and in developing Member States' YPS expertise. Finland has, for example, delivered a speech at the UN Security Council on behalf of the group's chairs and coordinated efforts to ensure YPS considerations were included in the UN's 2024 Pact for the Future. Finland's active engagement has also helped raise the group's profile.

**Finland has promoted dialogue between the UN and civil society and increased the visibility of civil society organizations working on YPS at the UN.** Finland funded the UN-civil society dialogue event as the sole donor in 2023 and jointly with Denmark in 2024. In 2024, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), which organized the event, made YPS one of its priorities and significantly increased the number of young peacebuilders participating in the dialogue. The dialogue also included a dedicated segment on the YPS agenda, where the Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN delivered the opening remarks.

**Finland continues to support other UN Member States in implementing the YPS agenda.** Finland's Permanent Mission to the UN responds weekly to inquiries about what YPS is and how to engage with it. In addition to co-chairing the YPS Group of Friends, the Permanent Mission has strengthened EU positions on YPS policy in the context of the UN and ensured that YPS perspectives are reflected in UN resolutions.

**Finland's support has helped create a home base for youth and YPS issues within the UN.** After the adoption of the first YPS resolution, the UN lacked personnel and a dedicated office to coordinate the YPS agenda. In 2019, Finland began funding a Youth, Peace and Security expert post in the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. When this office transitioned into the UN Youth Office in 2022, the post was transferred there, and Finland continued its funding for 2023–2024. Finland's support enabled the development and institutionalization of a YPS portfolio as one of the core functions of the UN Youth Office. The UN Youth Office also encouraged the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) to integrate youth into its work. In 2025, the UN Youth Office joined the UN Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Secretariat. This Secretariat, composed of the UN Youth Office, PBSO/DPPA and UNFPA, coordinates YPS collaboration across the UN system. The UN Youth Office does not operate at the field level, and since Finland's funding ended, it no longer has a dedicated YPS expert.

**Finland has succeeded in mainstreaming YPS thinking within the UN.** Finnish actors are praised for their ability to integrate YPS into speeches and briefings in a natural and credible way, which has helped raise awareness of the agenda within UN organizations and among Member States. The active participation of Finnish youth delegates in negotiations has also supported broader understanding of young people's importance within the UN. Finland has demonstrated that YPS is not a cosmetic addition to other work but a vital and useful theme for promoting peace and security globally. Finland's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York has played a key role in strengthening the YPS agenda and youth participation and influence in UN processes, Member State negotiations, and all phases of resolution drafting, negotiation, implementation, and monitoring, such as by supporting civil society participation in reviewing the UN peacebuilding architecture. The Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN has also co-led the Member State YPS Group of Friends with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

**Finland played an important role in drafting the UN's Pact for the Future, which emphasizes youth and future generations.** Finland promoted the inclusion of civil society perspectives in the negotiation process and, together with the YPS Group of Friends, secured a commitment in the Pact to the second independent progress study on the contributions of youth to peace processes in the Pact.

**Stakeholders hope Finland will continue to provide strategic funding for YPS work.** Due to UN reforms, the risk of losing YPS funding is greater than before, so Finland would gain even more visibility and recognition as a donor. Currently, there is no dedicated YPS expert at UN headquarters; responsibilities are divided among several offices and experts. UN actors hope Finland could fund or encourage other donors to fund positions dedicated to YPS work at UN headquarters.

#### 3.2.4 Opportunities to Leverage YPS Expertise in Finland's UN Security Council Campaign

**Finland has already promoted the YPS agenda in the Security Council by encouraging Council members to put the issue on the Council's agenda** YPS is officially part of the Security Council's meeting agenda, but it is not addressed annually. Finland has urged Council members to bring the theme into Security Council debates and has delivered a YPS-related statement in the Council on behalf of the co-chairs of the YPS Group of Friends.

**Finland is particularly well known within UN circles as an active advocate for the YPS agenda.** YPS is not a divisive or sensitive issue among Member States, except for a few isolated cases, which makes it possible to build partnerships with new actors, especially partners from the Global South. Finland's active engagement with the YPS agenda demonstrates that Finland is, more broadly, an active and significant player in global peace efforts.

**The importance of youth for societal stability has recently become more pronounced in various countries, such as Nepal, Indonesia, and Madagascar.** Finland has strong expertise in the peaceful integration of youth into societal decision-making. This expertise can be highly valuable as countries consider how to ensure the voice of Generation Z is heard while maintaining social peace.

**Some UN actors and Member States hope Finland will promote the YPS agenda in the UN Security Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission.** Interviewed stakeholders believe it could be beneficial for Finland to commit to advancing the YPS agenda even more actively if elected to the Security Council.

**Finland's profile in YPS work can also serve as an effective counterbalance to global political polarization.** The current global situation, marked by challenges to international order and law, affects not only institutional instability and limited funding but also political polarization. At the same time, this global context underscores the relevance and importance of YPS work, which can serve as a constructive and forward-looking response to today's challenges. The concrete frameworks that YPS work potentially offers are considered particularly valuable in this regard.

## 4. Mapping of YPS Best Practices in Selected Countries

This benchmarking draws on initiatives led by Member States and regional organizations that have advanced the YPS agenda on country, regional and global levels. The best practices were collected through a survey and interviews with government officials/representatives of regional organizations. A total of eight entities representing different organizations provided a response to the best practices mapping survey.<sup>11</sup> In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from Nigeria, Jordan, Ireland and the African Union. Examples of potential ways to make use of the YPS best practices from other countries in the Finnish context are provided as part of the benchmarking section here. The collected best practices have also informed the recommendations of this review, which are presented in Chapter 5. The entire mapping of YPS best practices is available in Annex 3 of this review.

**Strengthening coordination among young people and the government counterparts is the backbone of effective YPS National Action Plans.** The African Union's experience shows that when coordination is treated as a core function, YPS advancement becomes more strategic: priorities are clearer, implementation moves faster, and results become measurable. Two key elements stand out: First, AU's dedicated structures, including its Youth Ambassadors programme, put young people in formal liaison roles that bridge ministries, municipalities, and civil society. Second, AU's regional 10-year YPS implementation plan prioritizes specific high-impact areas (on supporting a YPS NAP development across the region) rather than spreading efforts thin, which has produced visible outcomes.

These lessons could be translated into Finnish context e.g. by institutionalizing coordination mechanisms beyond a traditional YPS coalition or network approach. In practice this could be done by replicating the Youth YPS Ambassadors model in Finland by anchoring it at the municipal level. Each municipality would nominate a youth ambassador who serves as the primary focal point, gathering local priorities, coordinating with civil society and services, and relaying them to the relevant ministries. In turn, ministries would provide the Youth Ambassadors with guidance, training, and a clear communication channel back to municipalities. This two-way stream closes the gap between the national and local levels, speeds up implementation, and ensures YPS actions reflect real needs on the ground.

**Making YPS priorities concrete and focused, strengthens visibility and branding.** Drawing on FBA's strategic, capacity-building approach, Sweden has built a strong reputation as a YPS educator by targeting

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<sup>11</sup> Cameroon (two responses), Nigeria (three responses), Peace and Freedom Organization (CSO), UNFPA (Regional Office- West Africa), YWCA-YMCA of Sweden, FBA (an interview was conducted as a part of the overall review report).

clear priority gaps and producing tangible tools and materials. The key takeaway for Finland could be to focus on a few high-impact YPS priorities, develop concrete products (e.g. guides, toolkits, training modules), and pair them with regular capacity-building forums or workshops. This approach could also boost branding around Finland's National Action Plan. By systematically documenting best practices and lessons from implementation covering both the first National Action Plan and this review of it, Finland could showcase results and reinforce a recognizable YPS brand.

**Driving impact by mainstreaming YPS into the WPS framework and regional organizations, reinforcing current systems instead of creating new ones.** Ireland has advanced the YPS agenda by mainstreaming it into the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (WPS). This offers a clear lesson; YPS components can be strengthened within existing frameworks rather than by creating new ones. Building on Ireland's approach, Finland could deepen synergies between YPS and WPS by bringing more YPS elements and stronger YPS language into its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. There is also real potential to further mainstream the YPS agenda at the EU level; here, Finland could work with Ireland and other Member States to champion and scale YPS across EU policies and platforms.

**Strengthening the existing structures can advance the YPS agenda.** Jordan demonstrates the value of investing early in the YPS National Action Plan's underpinnings by setting up the foundational structures, securing budget lines, and reflecting on a monitoring framework from the get-go. A strong focal-point system (one focal point in every ministry) creates joint ownership and clear accountability for the YPS efforts. These steps could be replicated in the Finnish context while strengthening the existing coordination structures for the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security, exploring both dedicated budget lines and specific monitoring frameworks coupled by a "YPS" marker to track all investments made to advance the National Action Plan could further solidify Finland's YPS efforts. Cameroon also models a cross-ministerial approach through a dedicated coordination body; the National Commission on Youth, Peace and Security (CNJPS) which keeps the YPS-agenda as a focus across government bodies. Finland could deepen engagement in YPS at the ministries by establishing a dedicated YPS-focal point in each ministry and providing capacity-building materials for staff working on the agenda, including induction materials for new focal points.

**Connecting the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security, and YPS efforts to the local level for action-oriented impact.** Nigeria demonstrates a powerful example of how the YPS agenda can be localized through State level Action Plans. Nigeria has also traced initial impact and results of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security through developing impact reports. Finland could adapt this

approach by drafting localized, “municipality or regionally linked” versions of the National Action Plan on Youth Peace and Security.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Developing the Implementation of the YPS Agenda Domestically

*Finland has successfully included youth as active actors and as part of promoting peace and security both domestically and internationally.*

#### **Recommendation 1:**

In implementing Finland’s national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security, it is essential to ensure that actions are not carried out only *for* youth, but that they are implemented and monitored in cooperation with youth and civil society organizations. Youth voices must be heard in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the national action plan, while the government continues to implement the action plan as an official process together with youth. YPS work should not be used as a partisan political tool to avoid silencing youth voices.

*Although Finnish youth participate actively in peace and security work, the profile of participating youth is fairly homogeneous, and many groups remain underrepresented. Youth from diverse backgrounds or minorities are not always reached despite stakeholders’ efforts.*

#### **Recommendation 2:**

Special attention should be directed toward hearing and involving underrepresented youth in YPS activities. For example, immigrants, persons with disabilities, cultural minorities, and youth without formal education should be reached, heard, and engaged more actively. This can be achieved by leveraging the expertise and networks of organizations, municipal youth work, schools, and other actors working with youth, with attention also given to areas outside the capital region.

*YPS work in the government is carried out across sectors and often as part of other programs and processes without a separate budget. However, developing and implementing this work domestically will continue to require resources.*

#### **Recommendation 3:**

Resources for implementing the national action plan should be secured both within government and civil society organizations. Adequate resources must be allocated for coordination work within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and their use for YPS work must be ensured. The Youth, Peace and Security Network should continue to be supported and resourced for its activities. If sectoral

ministries or civil society organizations are expected to implement the YPS agenda more actively through dedicated actions, funding must be budgeted for these activities.

*The national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security is actively implemented by various stakeholders across sectors, but the achievement of different objectives and actions is not systematically monitored. Reporting has relied on stakeholders' informal descriptions of YPS-related activities. Only some stakeholders have reported their actions according to the structure of the action plan, making it impossible to systematically track the implementation and responsible actors.*

**Recommendation 4:**

A simple reporting template should be prepared for stakeholders implementing the national action plan, allowing them to indicate which actions listed in the plan they have carried out during the implementation period. The reporting request may include open-ended questions and space for more detailed descriptions of actions, which stakeholders can complete within their resource limits.

*Measuring the impact of YPS work is not possible because the national action plan does not include defined indicators. The lack of impact measurement partly hinders YPS implementation, as civil society organizations find it difficult to justify the importance of YPS work to external stakeholders, such as funders, without evidence of its impact. On the other hand, developing and adopting a comprehensive set of indicators is resource intensive. Search for Common Ground funded by Finland, has developed a framework for measuring peacebuilding impacts suitable for YPS work, but its applicability to Finland's national action plan has not yet been assessed.*

**Recommendation 5:**

Opportunities to utilize existing international indicator frameworks applicable to YPS work should be examined in Finland's YPS efforts.

If resources are available, Finland's national action plan could have its own indicators, but their development and monitoring should not significantly reduce resources available for implementing the plan.

*Many stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations, are often asked to present Finland's national action plan on Youth, Peace, and Security and its best practices in drafting and implementation to international audiences. However, Finnish YPS actors have not prepared shared communication materials for use in international events, where Finland's actions, best practices, and lessons are presented. As a result, many actors have independently prepared materials to support their presentations and communication.*

**Recommendation 6:**

Common communication materials about Finland's YPS work and activities should be prepared for use by different stakeholders in an international context. Materials should include at least a slide deck for presentations and distribution to interested parties, as well as content for social media. If resources allow, producing video material should also be considered.

*Although Finland is a pioneer at many levels in involving youth in official processes and more broadly in society, best practices are not actively shared among different actors. Both domestic actors and Finnish organizations operating internationally would benefit from training on youth participation.*

**Recommendation 7:**

A training program on best practices for youth participation in the YPS context could be developed for ministries, agencies, municipalities, organizations, and other interested parties. The training could be a concise online course supplemented by lectures if needed. A separate version of the course could be developed for actors working in crises, peace, and security, such as CMC, the Finnish Defence Forces, and NATO. The training could also be marketed and sold to other potentially interested actors.

*Civil society organizations play a key role in Finland's YPS activities, and cooperation between civil society and government has worked well. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in identifying synergies and in the timing of information requests directed at organizations to ensure that necessary data is collected as comprehensively and efficiently as possible.*

**Recommendation 8:**

More time should be allowed for hearing youth perspectives and collecting information from youth organizations to make full use of volunteer contributions and reach youth as broadly as possible. Attention should also be paid to information exchange between organizations and authorities to identify cooperation opportunities in time and avoid overlapping actions.

*Finland's YPS work largely builds on previous actions and observed needs across sectors. However, it lacks a situational overview that could serve as a basis for the national action plan and for identifying strategic priorities.*

**Recommendation 9:**

In the future, it would be useful to prepare a situational overview of Youth, Peace and Security themes that maps related trends and changes, operational needs, priorities, and relevant stakeholders. This

overview should be used in drafting the next national action plan and in identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders. The approach can be modeled on situational analyses used as the basis for national peace and security strategies.

## 5.2 Finland's Added Value to Global YPS Work in the Future

*Finland has actively promoted the YPS agenda, particularly within the UN, and has taken a strong role as co-chair of the UN Member States' YPS Group of Friends alongside the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. However, the future of the YPS agenda within the UN system remains uncertain due to budget pressures and organizational reforms.*

### **Recommendation 10:**

Finland should maintain and continue its strong role as an advocate for YPS at the UN. Chairing the UN Member States' YPS Group of Friends should continue, and resources should be allocated to ensure YPS themes are considered across UN entities and activities. In addition to Finland's Permanent Mission to the UN, experts seconded to the UN system could play a significant role in this as part of their duties.

*Internationally, YPS work emphasizes actions at the UN and state level, while resources for grassroots peacebuilding are increasingly limited. Youth organizations specializing in YPS activities in developing countries often have very limited resources to operate, and in some countries, efforts are made to restrict their activities.*

### **Recommendation 11:**

Political support and resources directed by Finland to the international YPS context should increasingly target grassroots youth organizations in developing countries that promote the YPS agenda in their own countries, as well as maintaining and enhancing their operational capacity.

*The YPS theme is relevant in many areas of international cooperation, such as EU cooperation, development cooperation, civilian crisis management, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, and defense cooperation, but YPS perspectives are not yet comprehensively considered across these areas.*

### **Recommendation 12:**

The YPS dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting theme in various forms of international cooperation whenever relevant. A cross-cutting and mainstreamed approach would also enhance YPS promotion when there are no resources for separate YPS actions or projects. Finland should also promote the YPS agenda more actively within the EU in cooperation with other Member States.

*International stakeholders regard Finland as a model country in YPS work and want to learn from Finnish YPS practices worldwide. However, Finland does not have a ready-made product to support, for example, the drafting of other countries' national action plans on Youth, Peace and Security.*

**Recommendation 13:**

Ways should be explored for Finland to actively offer its YPS expertise and best practices for use by other countries. Any potential training package or product should include both government and civil society expertise and could, where possible, be commercialized for interested actors.

*Finland has done pioneering work in involving youth in international meetings and ministerial-level negotiations.*

**Recommendation 14:**

Youth consultations in international meetings and negotiations should continue. Methods used for youth consultations at the Nordic-African Foreign Ministers' Meeting should be applied where possible in other similar meetings and events to spread the practice to meetings hosted by other countries worldwide. Youth consultations and participation should also be promoted in international organizations such as the UN, EU, OSCE, and AU.

*YPS actions have strengthened Finland's brand as a country emphasizing peace and security issues. Through YPS, Finland's profile as a leader in peace and security could be further elevated in view of its upcoming UN Security Council campaign.*

**Recommendation 15:**

Visibility of Finland's YPS work should be promoted even more, while actively offering support to countries interested in the YPS agenda for advancing national YPS work and possible national action plans. Finland could also foster cooperation among countries interested in YPS outside the UN by convening a YPS working group and organizing a high-level YPS-themed event as part of its Security Council campaign. Activating the role of a YPS Ambassador should also be considered as part of the campaign. Other recommendations presented above that promote Finland's international visibility in the YPS field (especially Recommendations 3, 6, 10, 12, and 13) also support Finland's Security Council campaign.

### 5.3 Stakeholders Needed in YPS Work

Finland's domestic YPS activities involve a wide range of actors from different ministries and youth organizations. However, for greater impact, it would be useful to consider how this group could be complemented by a few actors with strong connections to YPS themes but who are not currently part of Finland's YPS monitoring group.

**Municipalities, particularly their youth services, youth centers, and outreach youth work** carry out significant YPS-relevant activities on the ground close to young people, but they are not involved in national YPS work. Actions relevant to YPS within municipal education services and schools could also be better integrated into national YPS efforts. Possible ways to involve the municipal sector should be explored to support with bringing YPS work from central government to the local level.

**Organizations representing persons with disabilities** do not play a visible role in Finland's YPS monitoring group, even though the rights of persons with disabilities are widely addressed in the national action plan on Youth, Peace and Security. Including disability organizations would also help ensure that the perspectives of young people with disabilities are reflected in YPS work.

**Immigrant youth** often have a strong desire to influence but few channels to express their views. YPS work should involve immigrant youth organizations or networks, or otherwise ensure that immigrant youth can find ways to participate if they wish.

**The police** work actively with youth, particularly on security-related issues, but they have withdrawn from participation in the YPS monitoring group. The Ministry of the Interior is represented in the group but primarily through its civilian crisis management functions. Police departments or the Ministry's Police Department could be encouraged to rejoin the work so that the police can exchange ideas on YPS themes with other stakeholders.

**The Conscript Union** represents young conscripts in the Finnish Defence Forces and in society more broadly. Military service is linked to peace and security themes through the defense perspective. Currently, the Ministry of Defence participates in the YPS monitoring group and represents the Finnish Defence Forces to some extent, but inviting the Conscript Union should be considered.

Internationally, involving the military and police in YPS work is a matter of debate, but in Finland's context, compulsory military service and voluntary military service for women bring the armed forces close to youth age groups.

The role of **businesses** is not prominent in YPS activities in Finland or globally. However, raising awareness of YPS themes within the business sector could help embed and spread the agenda and, in some cases, support resourcing for YPS work.

Other stakeholders, such as **mental health organizations, research institutions, and churches**, should also be considered for inclusion. Encouraging **higher education institutions** to participate could increase resources for researching the YPS agenda, for example through theses and academic projects.

At the international level, stakeholders interviewed for this review hope that YPS work will attract more political decision-makers, private companies, UN entities related to disarmament and peacekeeping, development cooperation actors, ministries, states, local governments, as well as international communities and development banks.

## Annex 1: Evaluation Questions Defined by the Client

### National Level / General Level

- Have different actors found the YPS action plan useful for their work? What added value has YPS work provided to them?
- Have the drafting and monitoring processes of the action plan been perceived as inclusive and efficient?
- What have been Finland's particular success areas or so-called best practices in YPS work, and what areas need improvement?

### International Level

- How has the action plan and its implementation been reflected in Finland's global public image?
- How has the action plan been utilized in Finland's UN, foreign, and security policy advocacy?
- How has Finland succeeded in strengthening the integration of the YPS agenda into UN work?
- In what ways can Finland leverage its YPS expertise in its Security Council campaign?

### Recommendations for Future Implementation

- How should Finland further develop the implementation of the YPS agenda?
- What could be Finland's specific added value to global YPS work in the future?
- How can Finland effectively promote YPS work while considering resource constraints in government?
- Which actors should commit to YPS work in the future to ensure its impact?

## **Annex 2: Organizations Consulted for the Review**

### **Government of Finland**

CMC Finland – Crisis Management Centre

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Education and Culture

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of the Interior

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

OSCE Chairmanship Secretariat

Political Department (POL-03)

Peace Mediation

Unit for UN and General Global Affairs (POL-50)

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, New York

Ministry of the Environment

### **Civil Society Organizations and Networks in Finland**

CMI – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation

Finn Church Aid

Youth, Peace and Security Network

Nuorisola - The Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector (FYCS)

YMCA Finland

UN Youth of Finland

## **UN Organizations**

UN Department of Peace Operations

UN Youth Office

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

## **Other International Actors**

Building Blocks for Peace Foundation

OSCE Secretariat

Folke Bernadotte Academy

GPPAC

Search for Common Ground (SFCG)

United Network of Young Peacebuilders

University of Notre Dame

## **International stakeholders consulted for the benchmarking**

### Interviews:

African Union

Folke Bernadotte Academy<sup>12</sup>

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Ireland

Nigeria<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Folke Bernadotte Academy was interviewed as part of this review, and their responses were also used for the mapping exercise.

<sup>13</sup> Nigeria was interviewed through written questions

Survey responses:

Cameroon (two responses),  
Nigeria (three responses),  
Peace and Freedom Organization (CSO),  
UNFPA (Regional Office- West Africa),  
YWCA-YMCA of Sweden

In addition, Finnish and international experts who have previously worked on the YPS agenda were interviewed for the review.

## Annex 3: Best Practices on Advancing the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in Selected Countries

Prepared by Emilia Hannuksela.

### 1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this benchmarking exercise is to map, identify, and analyze best practices regarding effective approaches on advancing the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda. The aim is for the best practices collected to inform the review process of the first Finnish National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth, Peace, and Security. And to the extent possible inform and shape the creation of the recommendations of the review report of the Finnish National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.

This benchmarking draws on initiatives led by Member States and regional organizations that have advanced the YPS agenda on country-, regional-, and global levels. The best practices were collected through a survey (between 25 September to 8 October 2025), and four interviews with government officials/representatives of regional organizations. A total of eight responses were collected through the best practices mapping survey.<sup>14</sup> While a total of four in-depth interviews were conducted. These interviews included *Nigeria, Jordan, and Ireland*. A representative from the *African Union* was also interviewed for the benchmarking exercise.

### 2. Analytical Framework

The collected best practices has been assessed against the theoretical framework outlined in the *Implementing the YPS Agenda at a Country Level: A “Guide for Public Officials”* where advancement of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda is categorized into four key “pathways”, including: 1. *Roadmaps and frameworks*, 2. *Policies and Programmes*, 3. *Projects* and 4. *Services*.

The figure below illustrates the analytical framework guiding the best practices mapping, which draws upon the theoretical framework outlining four key YPS implementation pathways. As demonstrated by the figure below, the selected best practices for this benchmarking exercise have been assessed against key criteria, including:

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<sup>14</sup> These responses included: Cameroon (two responses), Nigeria (three responses), Peace and Freedom Organization (CSO), UNFPA (Regional Office- West Africa), YWCA-YMCA of Sweden, FBA (an interview was conducted as a part of the overall review report).

1. **Relevance** to the YPS pillars and UNSCR 2250<sup>15</sup> (and subsequent UNSC resolutions 2419<sup>16</sup>, and 2535<sup>17</sup>)
2. **Youth leadership and meaningful participation**
3. **Partnerships and collaboration**
4. **Effectiveness** in achieving key results
5. **Innovation & Replicability** in other contexts

### Analytical framework

Dimension/Key criteria	Guiding Question	Pathway to Advancing the YPS-agenda
<b>Relevance to UNSCR resolutions and 2250: five key pillars:</b> ( <i>Participation, Prevention, Protection, Partnerships, Reintegration</i> )	What YPS pillar(s) does the initiative advance?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roadmaps and frameworks,</li> <li>2. Policies and Programmes,</li> <li>3. Projects</li> <li>4. Services</li> </ol>
<b>Youth Leadership and Meaningful Participation</b>	To what extent were young people meaningfully engaged in the initiative?	
<b>Partnerships and Collaboration</b>	Were partners engaged and who were they?	

<sup>15</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/814032?v=pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_2419.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2419.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2535\(2020\)](https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2535(2020))

<b>Effectiveness &amp; Outcomes</b>	What concrete results were achieved?	
<b>Innovation and Scalability</b>	What makes the approach stand out and transferable?	

### 3. Best Practices Identified (aligning with the key criteria in the analytical framework)

#### African Union

The African Union (AU) has benefited from drawing on YPS National Action Plan development best practices from Finland. AU also participated in a YPS-best practices workshop that was organized by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2022. It was also the first region in the world to create a Youth, Peace and Security strategy titled the “[Continental Framework](#).” The development process was youth-driven and included one of the most wide-reaching youth consultations in Africa, covering all sub-regions to shape a dynamic framework for advancing the YPS-agenda in the region. This youth-inclusive approach used a series of consultations to assess the state of YPS in countries across the African region. It further mapped youth involvement, identified challenges, and captured specific trends in each sub-region. The framework was designed to be broad enough to encompass diverse sub-regional contexts. A comprehensive report from the regional consultations documented the unique experiences of each sub-region, and based on these findings, the Continental Framework was finalized and officially adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council in 2019. To complement this regional YPS-framework, a [10-year Implementation Plan \(2020-2029\)](#), was developed in collaboration between young people and experts.

With the Continental Framework and 10-year Implementation Plan as a blue print the African Union has chosen to adopt a strategic approach to implementing the YPS-agenda in the region, by prioritizing most of their resources and capacity in advocating for the development and adoption of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security, across countries in the (African) region.

This has proven to be an impactful approach where currently 7 African Countries has adopted a YPS-National Action Plan, and about 7-8 African countries are in the process of developing a National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security in the region. The AU has also endorsed the president of Burundi as a YPS Champion for the region who has played a key role supporting the advocacy of developing National Action Plans on Youth, Peace, and Security in African countries. To further advance the development of

National Action Plans in the region, the AU is also expecting to launch a guidance note to government officials on how to develop National Action Plans by the end of 2025.

To support the advancement of the *Continental Framework* and *10-year Implementation Plan*, the AU has in close collaboration with young people, also put into place some well-thought coordination structures across the region. These youth inclusive coordination structures or mechanisms include:

The *African Union Youth Ambassadors for Peace*, which is the most well established, youth inclusive coordination mechanisms in advancing YPS within the African Union. Currently, AU is rolling out the call for the fourth cohort of applications (to youth from the entire region). On average, the initiative has reached 3000 applications from young people, which have all been screened. The selection process is comprehensive (including interviews) and entirely merit based while taking into consideration gender-balance. The final shortlist of the five selected Ambassadors is also endorsed at the AU heads of state level, providing the mandate with a strong political backing and commitment. This structure allows for the AU to coordinate and collaborate directly with the sub-regional bodies who also advance the YPS agenda (such as ECOWAS, IGAD etc.) with the Youth Ambassadors as their key interlocutors. A big focus area for the Youth Ambassadors is to advocate for the development of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security in African countries. To advance this, they work with YPS-coalitions across African countries, with the support of the African Union.

Examples of additional innovative structures and youth inclusive coordination mechanisms within the AU, include the *Network of African Youth in Conflict Prevention, and Mediation*. This network was created based on a decision from AU heads of state in 2022, but it was operationalized two years later in October 2024. The focus is on youth engagement and inclusion in mediation, peace processes, and conflict resolution in non-violent means. This network offers a concrete example of how young people can practically and hands on engage in mediation processes. After operating for one year, the network members have been systematically employed to AU's preventive diplomacy missions, where these young people have been engaged in mediation efforts. Young people participating in these missions have also been compensated for their expertise and contributions.

The *Network of African Youth in Conflict Prevention, and Mediation*, is likely one of the first networks globally which has created opportunities for young people with experience mediation and peace processes to put their expertise into practice in a mediation context while supporting senior mediators, allowing for an intergenerational exchange. The AU and the *Network of African Youth in conflict prevention and mediation*, has also collaborated with the Finnish-South African Youth Mediation Programme by hosting a visit for them in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia in 2025. The aim was for the Finnish-South African Youth Mediation Programme to

learn from the African Union's approaches to mediation and conflict resolution, including AUs mediation structures. Following the exchange, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security suggested inviting young African mediators from the Finland–South Africa Mediation Programme to future AU missions as mediation experts. Political buy-in from the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security enabled the inclusion of young mediators in missions and established a strategic, inclusive approach to preventive diplomacy. The positive results have also encouraged the AU to replicate this model in future missions where feasible.

The *AU Youth4peace roster*, offers another example of a creative mechanism bringing together 50 young people (10 per sub-region) with expertise on different thematic areas such as, SSR, DDR, rule of law, humanitarian law, human rights, etc. The aim is to have a standing roster to support AU colleagues to systematically include youth perspectives on diverse thematic issues connected to peace and security. The mechanism creates an accessible structure to meaningfully engage young people on thematic issues. The AU also has a strong collaboration with the African Union Youth Envoy to advance the YPS agenda in the region.

### **Folke Bernadotte Academy (Sweden)**

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is a Swedish government agency for, security and development. FBA has advanced the Youth, Peace and Security agenda since 2018, and defined YPS as an area of expertise in their work including dedicated training/guidance, research, and secondments. By systematically prioritizing capacity building, FBA has built a strong reputation as a YPS educator. These efforts began in the global policy space, where FBA partnered with the United Nations (UN) to organize YPS-learning forums with the aim of ensuring that the development of future learning materials would be based on real needs. In total FBA convened four learning forums targeting key YPS stakeholders, including: the UN family at the global level (2018), the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2019), regional UN actors (2022), and colleagues from UN peacekeeping and special political missions (2023).

Each forum identified concrete gaps and urgent learning needs. These were further translated by FBA and UN partners into clear, sequenced capacity-building priorities coupled with follow-on and support. Efforts included the development of tools and guidance such as the first-of-its-kind *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook*<sup>18</sup>, (for UN practitioners), and the *Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook* (for

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<sup>18</sup> [https://fba.se/en/about-fba/publications/youth-peace-and-security-a-programming-handbook/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://fba.se/en/about-fba/publications/youth-peace-and-security-a-programming-handbook/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Mission settings).<sup>19</sup> Through a long-term collaboration with the UN Staff System Colleague, FBA further converted these handbooks and tools into targeted YPS learning modules for UN staff, government officials, and practitioners. Not only did these learning modules, move the UN system from YPS-concepts to competencies, but also embedded a baseline of shared YPS understanding and norms. As a long-term result, these efforts strengthened practitioners' capacity in the global YPS policy space and further institutionalized the agenda across the UN system and beyond.

Guided by new government policies, since 2024, FBA has pivoted from global policy processes to country-level action, strengthening networks of young peacebuilders where impact is most immediate and measurable. This adoptive approach, adjusting the focus as contexts evolve, has created a durable catalyst for advancing the YPS agenda at the country level.

## **Ireland**

Ireland offers a strong, practical model for advancing the Youth, Peace and Security agenda by integrating it into the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>20</sup> In its recently launched fourth WPS National Action Plan, Ireland commits to redoubling efforts to promote and implement YPS (UNSCR 2250 and subsequent resolutions), with a clear emphasis on enabling young women as agents of change in conflict settings. The plan includes mentorship, training, and resourcing to empower young people to lead in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It also encourages where appropriate cross-border dialogue and lesson-sharing at the intersection of WPS and YPS.

This approach is part of a broader mainstreaming strategy: rather than building a separate National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security (with new funding, delivery capacity, and monitoring and evaluation demands), Ireland embeds YPS into existing WPS structures, accelerating implementation without “reinventing the wheel”. Few countries have adopted this synergistic WPS and YPS approach as deliberately as Ireland.

Concretely, Ireland advances YPS through collaboration and grants to youth-led peacebuilding organizations, including United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), strengthening grassroots capacity and policy linkages. Ireland has also prioritized capturing lessons from the Northern Ireland peace process, where youth participation and attention to intergenerational trauma have been central to sustaining peace. This learning

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<sup>19</sup> <https://fba.se/en/about-fba/publications/youth-peace-and-security-advisers-handbook/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/Final\\_WPS\\_NAP.pdf](https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/Final_WPS_NAP.pdf)

continues to inform Ireland's contemporary peacebuilding and security policy, while also recognizing that those who, as young people, were at the forefront of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland remain key to addressing its legacy.

Ireland also meaningfully engages young people in policy spaces through the UN Youth Delegate Programme and by strengthening the connections between its international engagement and domestic initiatives. Looking ahead, Ireland sees untapped potential to advance YPS within the European Union and intends to leverage its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2026 by embedding a strong youth component. Ireland's active role during EU YPS Week in November 2025 underscores this commitment.

### **Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**

In October 2025, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Jordan) launched its National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security. The process was driven by a strong youth-led YPS coalition representing all governorates in the country. The development of the National Action Plan put young people in the driver's seat with more than 3,200 young people participating in a nationwide priority-mapping survey. In addition, 25–30 youth-led consultations were held across the country to capture youth voices on the ground. These included young people from marginalized groups such as refugee youth, young women and youth in remote areas.

The inclusive efforts contributed to identifying 54 priorities, which the YPS Coalition summarized into a report which directly informed and shaped the development of the National Action Plan. The Jordanian Ministry of Youth led the overall development process of the National Action Plan with support from the United Nations, while young people managed outreach, data collection, and analysis; ensuring that the action plan reflects their lived realities. Shaped by contributions from young people in Jordan the National Action Plan also aligns with and draws on the [League of Arab States YPS strategy](#).<sup>21</sup> Implementation is further anchored in a robust focal point system comprising 25 appointed focal points covering all Jordanian ministries. The aim of the system is to ensure a coordinated approach to advancing the National Action Plan. To facilitate timely information-sharing and internal coordination, a WhatsApp group connects all focal points. The system is administered by the Youth, Peace, and Security Unit at the Ministry of Youth, which serves as the Secretariat. This Secretariat also convenes regular meetings to address strategic issues regarding the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan, including budget allocation. Focal points across ministries provide cross-cutting support for the YPS agenda and are fully briefed and committed.

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<sup>21</sup> [https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/arab-strategy-youth-peace-and-security-2023-2028?utm\\_](https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/arab-strategy-youth-peace-and-security-2023-2028?utm_)

Given staff turnover, the Secretariat (at the Ministry of Youth) has prepared an onboarding presentation to build the capacity of new focal points as they assume their roles.

What sets Jordan apart from other countries is that a lot of effort has been spent on developing a foundation for further advancement and implementation of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security. Before the National Action Plan was launched, the Prime Minister issued a circular directing all ministries and public organizations to incorporate the action plan into their planning. This request was put into practice by conducting a review which included the entire focal point system. The review itself aimed to map and prioritize the upcoming activities for 2025-2027 coupled with an activity implementation timeline and budget allocation.

Based on this initial review a detailed road map to put the National Action Plan into practice is currently under development in collaboration with civil society organizations and youth groups themselves, incorporating a youth inclusive and collaborative approach. It is also important to note that this roadmap development is coupled with a specific budget to support the roll out of YPS related activities (2025-2027). Once the roadmap has been finalized the next step is to create a monitoring and assessment framework (including a marker to identify annual investments on YPS activities across all ministries) to keep track of the efforts and work on advancing the National Action Plan. Furthermore, the Secretariat is in the process of re-activating the Ministerial Committee on YPS for the upcoming 10-year anniversary of the YPS agenda in December 2025. The Ministerial Committee is chaired by the Minister for Youth and aims to follow up on the implementation of the National Action Plan, while focusing on future resource mobilization and advocacy efforts.

## **Nigeria**

The development of Nigeria's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security <sup>22</sup>, (launched in 2021), was anchored in a strong, multi-stakeholder Youth, Peace and Security Coalition. The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, civil society organizations, and youth networks joined forces to form the Nigerian National Coalition on YPS. This partnership has been instrumental in driving the process forward and ensuring shared ownership of the National Action Plan. The Federal Ministry of Youth, Sports Development, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), and the Centre for Sustainable Development and Education in Africa (CSDEA), were the key penholders for the National Action Plan.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://nigeria.unfpa.org/en/publications/nigerian-national-action-plan-youth-peace-and-security>

Together they ran nationwide consultations, drafting, and technical validation, to ensure the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security reflected Nigeria’s realities and aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 2250.

Since the finalization of the National Action Plan, CSDEA has continued to sustain momentum by producing impact reports and assessing the advancement of the National Action Plan. Furthermore, CSDEA has supported localization of the Nigerian National Action Plan in Adamawa, Kaduna, and Benue where State Action Plans have been validated and developed. Meanwhile, coordination between national and state-level YPS mechanisms continues to be strengthened to drive coherent, effective implementation of the YPS Agenda.

Nigeria has also taken initial steps to expand the use of social media and digital platforms to amplify youth voices in governance, civic engagement, and public discourse. A forthcoming review will embed stronger digital engagement and communication strategies, so these platforms serve as tools for future youth inclusive peacebuilding, accountability, and progress tracking within the YPS-agenda and its advancement.

#### 4. Summarizing Best Practices on YPS Implementation

<b>Entity/ organization</b>	<b>Best practices</b>
<p><i>African Union’s Continental Framework on YPS and implementation structures</i></p> <p>(Focus regional level)</p>	<p>First region to establish a YPS strategy “<i>Continental Framework</i>” with youth focal points in regional economic communities and a peer-review mechanism. The continental framework is advanced on a subregional level through youth-inclusive coordination mechanisms including a Youth &amp; Peace Ambassadors Programme. The AU Youth Envoys have also advocated strongly for the YPS agenda within their mandates.</p>

<p><i>Cameroon's collaborative multistakeholder and youth inclusive approach to advancing YPS</i></p> <p>(Focus: national level)</p>	<p>The Youth, Peace and Security coalition in Cameroon is coordinated through the National Commission on Youth, Peace and Security (CNJPS). It was established early in the development process of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security (2023) and brings together a wide range of actors. Including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Government Institutions, their role is to provide political leadership, policy alignment, and institutional backing for the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.</li> <li>2. Civil society and youth-led organizations. They mobilize young people, lead awareness campaigns, support community mediation, and implement local peacebuilding and socio-economic initiatives.</li> <li>3. Youth structures and representatives that act as advocates, community mobilizers, and focal points in the regions for the implementation of the National Action Plan.</li> <li>4. International partners and UN agencies that strengthen youth capacities and accompany the institutionalization of the YPS agenda.</li> <li>5. Traditional and religious authorities. They serve as moral guarantors and contribute to community buy-in, legitimacy and conflict mediation.</li> </ol>
<p><i>Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) strategic approach to build YPS capacity as a priority</i></p>	<p>Sweden, through FBA, has established strong credibility as a leading capacity builder in the YPS field by strategically investing in one priority area: capacity building. Significant efforts have gone into developing concrete training, tools, and materials for</p>

(Focus: Global level)	diverse target groups, including UN entities and public officials, to advance the YPS agenda.
<i>Ireland advancing the YPS agenda through the WPS National Action Plan.</i>  (Focus Global level)	Ireland’s integrated model: mainstreaming YPS within National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, resourcing youth-led peacebuilding, and projecting ambition at the EU level, offers a scalable best practice. It delivers sustainable YPS impact without creating additional structures and frameworks.
<i>The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s National YPS Coalition YPS and focal point network as tools to implement the Youth, Peace and Security agenda</i>  (Focus country-level)	Multi-stakeholder Youth, Peace, and Security Coalition, bringing together ministries and youth organizations. The Coalition has played a key role in the development of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security in Jordan. Jordan has also developed a strong focal-point network cross-cutting all ministries to support with advancing the implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan.
<i>Advancing the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in Nigeria through National and State Action Plans</i>  (Focus: Country-level and local-level)	The development of Nigeria’s National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security was anchored in a strong, multi-stakeholder Youth, Peace and Security Coalition. The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, civil society organizations, and youth networks came together to form the Nigerian National Coalition on YPS. This partnership has been instrumental in driving the process forward and ensuring shared ownership of the NAP. Partnerships have also been key to localizing the YPS agenda in different states/municipalities of Nigeria where state specific National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security have been created.

## 5. Conclusions & Key Takeaways from the Mapped Best Practices

**1. Strengthening coordination among young people and government counterparts is the backbone of effective National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security.** The African Union’s

experience shows that when coordination is treated as a core function, YPS advancement becomes more strategic: priorities are clearer, implementation moves faster, and results become measurable. Two key elements stand out: First, AU's dedicated structures, including its Youth Ambassadors programme, put young people in formal liaison roles that bridge ministries, municipalities, and civil society. Second, AU's regional 10-year YPS implementation plan prioritizes specific high-impact areas (on supporting development of National Action Plans across the region) rather than spreading efforts thin, which has produced visible outcomes.

Finland could consider translating these lessons into its own context by institutionalizing coordination mechanisms beyond a traditional YPS coalition or network approach. One option would be to replicate the Youth YPS Ambassadors model by linking YPS efforts to the municipal level, with each Youth Ambassador acting as a focal point between local actors and central ministries, thereby closing the national–local gap and accelerating YPS implementation. This could be paired with a strategic prioritization exercise to select two to three focus areas with clear metrics and budgets. Finally, there could be potential for Finland to build on existing initiatives such as the Finland-South Africa youth mentorship programme and further connect it to AU's Network of African Youth in Conflict Prevention and Mediation. There is also potential here to scale practical, youth-inclusive mediation roles, and mainstream this practical and youth inclusive- mediation model across regional and global forums where Finland participates such as the UN, EU, OSCE.

**2. Concreting and focused YPS priorities strengthens visibility and branding.** Drawing on FBA's strategic, capacity-building approach, Sweden has built a strong reputation as a YPS educator by targeting clear priority gaps and producing tangible tools and materials. The takeaway for Finland could be to focus on a few high-impact YPS priorities, develop concrete products (guides, toolkits, training modules e.g.), and pair them with regular capacity-building forums or workshops. This approach could also boost branding around Finland's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security. By systematically documenting best practices and lessons from implementation covering both the first National Action Plan and its review Finland could showcase results and reinforce a recognizable YPS brand.

**3. Driving impact by mainstreaming YPS into the WPS framework and regional organizations, reinforcing current systems instead of creating new ones.** Ireland has advanced the YPS agenda by mainstreaming it into the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This offers a clear lesson; YPS components can be strengthened within existing frameworks rather

than by creating new ones. Building on Ireland's approach, Finland could deepen synergies between YPS and WPS by bringing more YPS elements and stronger YPS language into its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. There is also real potential to further mainstream the YPS agenda at the EU level; here, Finland could work with Ireland and other Member States to champion and scale YPS across EU policies and platforms.

**4. Strengthening the existing structures can advance the YPS agenda.** The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan demonstrates the value of investing early in the underpinnings of the National Action Plan by setting up the foundational structures, securing budget lines, and reflecting on a monitoring framework from the get-go. A strong focal-point system (one focal point in every ministry) creates joint ownership and clear accountability for the YPS efforts. These steps could be replicated in the Finnish context while strengthening the existing coordination structures for the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security, exploring both dedicated budget lines and specific monitoring frameworks coupled by a "YPS" marker to track all investments made to advance the National Action Plan could further solidify Finland's YPS efforts.

Cameroon also models a cross-ministerial approach through a dedicated coordination body the National Commission on Youth, Peace and Security (CNJPS) which keeps the YPS-agenda a focus across government. Finland could deepen engagement in YPS at the ministries by establishing a dedicated YPS-focal point in each ministry and providing capacity-building materials for staff working on the agenda, including induction materials for new focal points.

**5. Connecting the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security with efforts on the local level for action-oriented impact.** Nigeria demonstrates a powerful example of how the YPS-agenda can be localized through State level Action Plans. Nigeria has also tracked initial impact and results of the National Action Plan through the development of impact reports. Finland could adapt this approach by developing localized, municipality or regionally linked versions of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.