



Photo: World Organization of the Scout Movement



# GLOBAL YOUTH CONSULTATION

DOHA, 1 - 2 SEPTEMBER 2015

## CHAIRS' SUMMARY

The Global Youth Consultation was held in Doha during 1-2 September 2015, hosted by the government of Qatar, and co-chaired by the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat (WHSS), Reach Out to Asia (ROTA) and the United Nations Major Group Children and Youth (MGCY). The support provided by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and generous donors from Qatar ensured the representation of **about 300 young people from 89 countries**, representing affected youth; youth-led organizations and youth experts from all regions. The Consultation was organized in six panel sessions with experts and young people sitting together to discuss the role of youth in humanitarian action. Each panel was followed by breakout sessions in which young people had the opportunity to engage in further discussions in smaller working groups. The exhibition fair has also provided a space to showcase organizations, projects, youth-led initiatives and venue for networking and information sharing.

**The Consultation has offered an opportunity for youth from different backgrounds and different experiences to discuss where youth stand in the current humanitarian landscape**, what they can provide to the field, how the world can better maximize their potential and how youth can have a stronger voice in humanitarian issues.

Youth make up more than a third of people displaced by conflicts and disasters worldwide. Crises have the potential to erode protective familial and social ties and can leave young people separated from their loved ones, whilst formal and non-formal educational programs are discontinued and community and social networks broken down. **The loss of livelihood, security, and protection provided by the family and community places young people at risk of poverty, violence, and abuse – not just during crisis,** but long into the future, affecting their countries' development even decades later. Young girls, in particular, face heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, which can result in unwanted pregnancy, HIV infection, psychosocial problems, and social stigmatization. There is also the threat of human trafficking and forced or early marriage.

Throughout the Consultation, young people have emphasized that **despite specific vulnerabilities faced under crises, they must be on the forefront of humanitarian action.** Youth are taking the lead in contributing to resilience and serving their societies when disaster strikes or conflict erupts. Youth have claimed that they deserve to be recognized as partners in humanitarian action, that they can provide innovative approaches to ameliorating the effects of humanitarian crises no matter the cause, and can help build societies that are resilient, peaceful and inclusive. It was highlighted the role of young women and men in driving innovation, creating solutions and insights into humanitarian crises.

**The importance of formal and non-formal education was strongly emphasized during the consultation.** The international community needs to ensure access to continued education and integrate the booming youth population into labor markets in order to reap the demographic dividend. Ignoring the different needs, capacities and contributions of women, girls, boys and men can mean that some segments of the population are overlooked, sometimes with destructive consequences. **Special attention was also given to gender issues,** recognizing the different needs, capacities and contributions of young women and men, shaped by their different gender roles and responsibilities.

The following summary of recommendations from the global youth consultation has been prepared based on the general inputs and remarks from the panels and breakout sessions held on the first and second days of discussion with young people. The summary does not reflect the full range of discussions and proposed recommendations that emerged from the consultation, and therefore should not be considered a consensus document. Nevertheless, it highlights the main discussions and the general recommendations proposed by the global youth.

## OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate an age-sensitivity approach focusing on young people in all phases of emergencies. The gender marker should evolve into a gender and age marker, which enshrines intergenerational and gender solidarity as to best address the needs of young people and all population age groups.
- A new global framework is needed to address the needs of young people in conflict. There is a clear demographic imperative to include youth in working to achieve peace and security. Humanitarian actors should systematically consult with youth civil society organizations to understand conflict dynamics, structural causes of violence, and priorities for peace.
- Young people play a critical role in the localization of response, which should be strengthened. Humanitarian effectiveness requires strengthened partnerships to build local capacity and resilience. Humanitarian actors need to empower young people, including adolescents, as positive agents of change and involve them in the design, implementation, a monitoring and evaluation of program activities.
- Young people are driving the development of creative solutions and insights into humanitarian crises, and the consultations recommended strategic partnerships with youth and

local, national and international partners across sectors to drive humanitarian innovation. Youth are also the best adapted to social technology, enabling them to mobilize local efforts. Young people emphasized the transformative potential of social media platforms to disseminate information and provide a voice.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS<sup>1</sup>

### Challenges to meet the humanitarian needs

As youth constitute over half the population, and with the diverse backgrounds, the perspectives, and the skillsets they bring to the table, youth can act as an integral part of any humanitarian action. As it stands, opportunities for youth to become involved in the increasingly complex humanitarian landscape are limited, preventing society from fully benefiting from the contributions they have to bring. During the Consultation, the global youth has demanded for a more active engagement, funding and capacity building to empower local actors.

1. Establish a funding mechanism that allows local actors to directly access humanitarian resources and implement an obligatory disclosure mechanism, such as shadow reporting, that ensures funds and responses are efficient and accounted for.
2. Fully implement and respect the Humanitarian Principles, along with International Humanitarian Law and relevant provisions and practices for disaster settings, in order to ensure that aid efforts are sustained and complete.
3. Develop methods that promote local capacity development, such as socially and environmentally responsible income generation projects by incorporating local actors in the structuring of humanitarian programs.

### Humanitarian Effectiveness

Young people stressed during the breakout sessions their active participation in humanitarian volunteering and their role as first responders during crises, sharing their skills, time and resources. Young people can facilitate peer-to-peer education in preparedness and peace-building; they help rebuild communities; they coordinate and connect individuals and organizations at all levels; they contribute to policy and advocacy initiatives and even promote dialogue and solidarity among divided communities in times of conflict.

4. Establish international standards around the principle of subsidiarity, through which grassroots action and community-based participation are essential aspects of humanitarian action. This bottom-up approach should take into account local contexts, supported by humanitarian principles and best practices mutually agreed-upon by international, national, and local-level stakeholders.
5. Prioritize dedicated, predictable and multi-year funding models addressing young people's priorities and capacities in the global humanitarian system. Donors must support youth-led organization, which are currently underfunded and disorganized.
6. Invest in relevant capacities, skills, and spaces to enable and facilitate young people to effectively communicate about prevention, preparedness, response and recovery within their communities

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<sup>1</sup> For a full and detailed version of recommendations, see the Doha Youth Declaration, document elaborated by young people in the Consultation. Available at: [http://childrenyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Doha-Youth-Declarationon-Reshaping\\_the\\_Humanitarian\\_Agenda-.pdf](http://childrenyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Doha-Youth-Declarationon-Reshaping_the_Humanitarian_Agenda-.pdf)

7. Develop specific data collection tools and train young volunteers in affected communities to collect, monitor, and report data that will inform country-level preparedness and response standards. Disaggregate data in conflict or crisis stricken areas by sex, age, and socio-economic, as well as other status so that the situations of youth can be assessed.
8. Protect the rights of vulnerable populations, including the fundamental right to health and International Right to Water and Sanitation, compliment and complete the current protection of human rights and International Humanitarian Law, thus addressing their increased risks of health, social and financial issues.
9. Ensure access and no obstructions to health care, including psychosocial and sexual and reproductive health care, during and after humanitarian crises.
10. Nurture and strengthen the capacity of youth through training programs, and an enabling and sustainable economic environment. Gender equality and empowerment of young women should be mainstreamed into all trainings and planning to ensure inclusive policies in humanitarian action. Refugees and affected populations from conflicts could be trained as facilitators and project managers who should then transfer their skills to other youth
11. Create local databases of ongoing local humanitarian engagement to highlight opportunities for social groups, especially youth, allow case study, and avoid duplication of efforts. Give actors access to information and resources, which will ensure Monitoring and Evaluation.
12. Include youth in accountability and feedback mechanisms for humanitarian action through grassroots reporting and monitoring. Ensure specific and easily measurable indicators of humanitarian work being done and cross-checked in reports. Projects of NGOs and INGOs should first be assessed and validated by local communities, including youth, based on its social, economic, and environmental impacts, and continuous follow-up should be available.

## Serving the needs of people in conflict

Young people have emphasized in the Consultation the direct link between peace, security and development. Without a stable and peaceful environment development cannot be sustainable. Nearly half of the global population is under the age of 30, with youth constituting a large portion of the global population affected by violence. Young people stressed their vital role in peacebuilding, they have the potential to act as community leaders in preventing violence, fostering reconciliation, and post-conflict reconstruction. They remarked with special reference to the work done by youth in the adoption of the Amman Youth Declaration as well as Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding.

13. Recognize the demographic imperative to include youth in work to achieve peace. Humanitarian and security actors should systematically consult with civil society, youth organizations to understand conflict dynamics, structural causes of violence, and priorities for peace.
14. Actively engage young people in the design and development of policies and responses, at all levels and in all regions, seeking to extend participation beyond the reach of dialogue.
15. Prevent gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, sexual and domestic violence, femicide and female genital mutilation.
16. Ensure safe access in conflicts to affordable and quality health services, including those for sexual and reproductive health, particularly for vulnerable people, including young women and adolescents, in humanitarian settings.
17. Provide quality support with a focus on building resilience; education, health services, vocational training and youth employment.
18. Create opportunities for the economic, social, and political empowerment of refugees, IDPs and affected peoples in conflict and non-conflict situations through prioritization of social en-

terprise, loan systems and targeted investments.

19. Develop innovative technologies such as e-learning platforms and mobile schools to enable affected populations to continue their education in displaced settings.
20. Equip youth with relevant skills (in social support and reconciliation) to be effective peacebuilders and agents of reconciliation.

## Transformation through Innovation

During the consultation youth has remarked their potential to adapt to fast evolving systems and capacities to generate innovative ideas and translate them into humanitarian action. Young people are not afraid to test new ideas, meet the challenges that emerge and rework their projects, and scale up identified solutions. They can further help integrate parallel processes, and design fit-for-purpose tools that satisfy specific local contexts. Young people have reaffirmed that innovation has the potential to expand the scope within which humanitarian aid will be reshaped through the World Humanitarian Summit process, especially when there is meaningful engagement of children and youth.

21. Improve networks for information dissemination and provide a voice for affected people, especially vulnerable groups in the humanitarian landscape and foster communication via robust and portable technologies at the local level to facilitate collaboration and engagement of different humanitarian actors (e.g. telemedicine, e-learning, Unicef U-Report).
22. Establish an open platform for youth to share information, collaborate, identify needs, make commitments and implement solutions along with other actors.
23. Engage in research-driven policies with local actors through innovation hubs/labs in order to build resilience, gather data, and determine the most appropriate mechanism for prevention or response proactively before a crisis occurs (e.g. use of Call Data Records (CDRs) for predicting migration).
24. Encourage alternative and supplemental funding systems to close funding gaps (e.g. crowdfunding, mobile money, cash transfers/vouchers and grant restructuring).
25. Make use of technologies such as mapping, web-based platforms, social networking, and others to build partnerships, engage youth in early-warning, promote reciprocal action, and coordinate efforts of different humanitarian actors.
26. Engage in dialogue between those providing and receiving aid to promote mutual understanding, promote best practices, and identify synergies and tradeoffs in humanitarian response.
27. Assess proper technology mechanisms at the regional and global level to measure the social, economic, and environmental impact of humanitarian interventions, as well as proper monitoring, follow-up, and review modalities.
28. Provide policies and guidelines that are accountable in humanitarian actions within the international humanitarian system, such as data disaggregation before and after humanitarian response, youth as field data collectors, and mobile data collection.

## Reducing vulnerabilities and managing risk

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is not just a science, but rather a way of life. Young people must be taught the ropes of DRR from an early age, and allowed to change to incorporate the best practices in their lives from an early stage. During the consultation, young people called for integration of DRR into school, university and community education curricula as an important part in reducing the vulnerability of the different groups, including children and youth. As a larger partition of society than other groups, and as a very diverse one that overlaps the other partitions, youth face a multitude of risks, particularly young woman, and are vulnerable to plenty of situations that can

affect them negatively. It was emphasized that investment in youth should be seen as a building block towards future and current resilience.

29. Develop, monitor, and review international and national DRR strategies with robust governance and accountability mechanisms, including through the operationalization of the Sendai Framework for Action on DRR.
30. Establish early warning mechanisms that meet the needs of all people, especially vulnerable people in disaster prone areas.
31. Enhance health care systems' preparedness and prevention of biological disasters through improved training of health personnel and the development and implementation of comprehensive hospital DRR strategies, including implementation of Safe Hospital Initiative, vaccination campaigns, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health strategies and psychosocial support.
32. Localize humanitarian response through compulsory disaster simulation trainings in schools and workplaces.
33. Establish a youth-led, institutionalized and global-to-local youth engagement platform that provides young people the space for meaningful contribution to DRR policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and review; lead youth friendly actions on education and awareness.
34. Reduce violence, including extremism, sexual violence and child abuse, through education and innovative tools of awareness.
35. Enhance DRR education and training that are gender and age sensitive need to be prioritized and include gender equity as a preventative tool to reduce risks of gender-based violence and high-risk sexual behavior.
36. Put vulnerable groups and people centered approach on the center of DRR actions, including preventative actions reducing the vulnerability of youth, children and women.

