Building Bridges Situation Report and Best Practices

Situation Report and Best Practices

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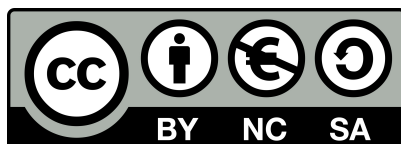Youth Advocate Ghana (YAG, Ghana)

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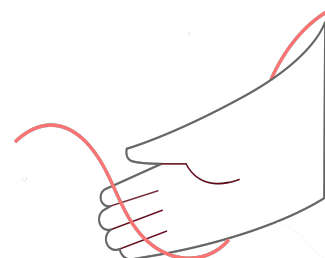
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was conducted as part of the project 'Building Bridges: Youth work for peace and dialogue', a two-year global project implemented by IFM-SEI and funded by the European Commission (EC). The overall goal of the project is to promote peace education and dialogue through youth work in developing countries and in Europe by initiating a cross-continental approach.

This research is set out to accomplish four important tasks. First it seeks to explore the perspectives of youth workers involved in the peace and human rights agenda across four continents: Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America. Secondly, it reviews existing literature on youth work, peace education and human rights education. Thirdly, the research assesses the number and quality of available training offers for youth workers intervening in this essential but delicate thematic area. Last but not the least, the study maps out case studies of good practices of peace and human rights education in all four regions participating in the research.

This research was inspired by the needs and challenges that all of our partners have faced in recent years. Across the globe we are seeing increasing rising divisions in societies and tensions between different social groups. There is an increased strain on young people due to political and socioeconomic pressures and groups of young people are blaming other groups for problems being created by the political elite. A rise of populism and nationalism is seeing groups being pitted against each other. The question of the integration of new arrivals is a prominent one not just in Europe, but further afield, with increasing hostility as migrants are being seen as being a drain on resources, whether in employment, welfare or education. Conflict is being seen on a macro and micro level in many societies inside and outside of Europe.

The research team learned that despite direct and indirect adverse impact of wars, conflicts and violence on young people especially in developing countries, policy makers continue to undermine the valuable contributions of young people in conflict negotiations and peace processes. Without youth at the centre of peace and conflict agenda, there is limited empirical data on the full impact of conflicts on young people, making intervention problematic. Even more disturbing, as our team learned, is the fact that there are few or no peace or human rights education trainings available for young people or youth workers to cope with the daily realities of the violence that they experience.

Finally, the study ends with a presentation of analysis and discussions of key findings demonstrating a link between literature review, data collection, theoretical framework and what this means for future research on youth work, human rights and peace education. It also presents some case studies on good practices in human rights and peace education as well as recommendations.

Chapter one

Introduction, research methodology, theoretical background

Introduction

In 2018, IFM-SEI embarked on an empirical journey investigating the perspectives of youth workers across four continents with regards to youth work, human rights and peace education. This research was conducted as part of a two-year global project funded by the European Commission called 'Building Bridges: Youth work for peace and dialogue' (Building Bridges). The main aim of the project is to Promote peace education and dialogue through youth work in developing countries and in Europe by initiating a cross continental approach.

Building Bridges is inspired by the needs and challenges that all IFM-SEI member organisations have faced in recent years. Across the globe we are seeing increasing divides in societies and tensions between different social groups. There is an increased strain on young people due to political and socioeconomic pressures and groups of young people are blaming other groups for problems being created by the political elite. A rise of populism and nationalism is seeing groups being pitted against each other. The question of the integration of new arrivals is a prominent one not just in Europe, but further afield, with increasing hostility as migrants are being seen as being a drain on resources, whether in employment, welfare or education.

Building Bridges addresses the need for a two-pronged approach of education and dialogue to tackle social exclusion and overcome the societal conflicts through youth work. We live in a globalised world and therefore need global solutions to local problems - hence this project will bring together partners from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The project has synergy with the objectives of European policies in education, training and youth. In line with Erasmus+, the project will improve young people's skills, competencies and

employability. The objectives of the project are closely aligned with the aims of the Paris Declaration, as it is implementing education to prevent radicalisation by building inclusive societies, and promoting the core European values of citizenship, values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education. Aligning with the EU Youth Strategy, the project will generate active citizens in society and promote citizenship through youth work. The project also supports the UN Resolution 2250 on the role of young people in issues of peace and security, as it recognises youth as being key to building peace, promotes youth participation in society, and provides tools for countering violent extremism.

The study

This report compiles research that was conducted as part of IFM-SEI's Building Bridges, generously supported by the European Commission. The overall objective of the project and consequently the study is to promote peace education and dialogue through youth work in developing countries and in Europe by initiating a cross continental approach.

The research process began in November 2018, and lasted for five months, to critically assess the perspectives of youth workers on their understanding of youth work, human rights and peace education especially for local youth workers in countries like Belgium, Cameroon, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru and Philippines. First, these countries were primarily selected to participate in this project because of the fragile nature of human rights and peace situations they experience. Secondly, because IFM-SEI partners who are participating in the project have extensive experience working implementing projects with young people and youth workers at local and national levels. This is why it was important to not just talk about youth issues but also get the perspectives of youth workers who risk their lives on a daily basis to ensure that youth issues are enshrined in human rights and peace discourses.

The research was undertaken as the first crucial step of the Building Bridges project; through our local research teams in these countries, we were able to conduct a desktop review, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with the aim of understanding youth work within particular contexts. We reviewed the human rights situations and how it affects young people, assessed the state of young people; youth policies and youth work.
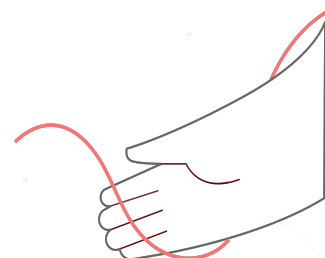
Methodology

The research plan was designed by members from all Building Bridges partner organisations. The partners chose to use qualitative interviews to conduct their research. A qualitative interview is a conversation between the researcher and the participant (Kvale, 1996) where meaning can be obtained (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) based on the participant's perspectives (Luff, 1999). The partners developed guiding questions for the interviews together that focus on the experiences of young people working with peace and human rights education across the continents. When developing the research plan, the partners reviewed existing literature of peace work to present to participants and see how youth workers' accounts might support these claims or not. The questions were constructed in three blocks:

- Youth Work
- Peace and Human Rights education
- What they think about the impact of Peace and Human Rights education in their local contexts

The partners all conducted their own research in their localities, focusing on the youth workers' reflections on their local context, their national context and their regional (continental) context. Then, Delphine Konda from Girls Excel Cameroon put the research outcomes together in this report.

Justification of Methodology

This research aims to unearth the perspectives of youth workers who are active in the field of peace and human rights education across the different continents, and to centre their voices and realities in this report. A gap we identified in popular representations on the impact of conflict on young people is that the articles are usually written from a third person perspective, rather than asking young people what they are doing in their communities and reporting on that. So, though there are different ways through which youth work, human rights and peace education can be investigated, we selected qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to conduct this research.

By using qualitative interviews as the research method, the researchers aim to create a platform and a favourable environment where participants can actually explain how they understand peace and human rights education and its impact in the lives of young people in their communities. In addition to the above reasons, the semi-structured nature of qualitative interviews promotes flexibility in a manner that is not possible with questionnaires. Through flexibility, the "interview and its participants are constantly developing" (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:14). Finally, this study recognised the importance of creating a comfortable environment and a rapport between the researcher and the participant who will be sharing their experiences. Interviews are the best way to achieve this because they help to bring out the participants "hidden feelings or attitudes and beliefs" (Berger, 1998: 55).

Methodological challenges

As a method, qualitative interview is considered "a route that leads to a goal" (Kvale, 1996:4), but it does not change the fact that there were potential risks or challenges that have been considered. Some of the challenges we identified are as follows:

• Participants hiding their true feelings, rather than giving honest accounts regarding their experiences (Silverman, 2001).

• The researchers misunderstanding and misconstruing participants' nuanced answers. This challenge was slightly mitigated by ensuring that the research was conducted by members of the community.

• The use of focus group discussions presents its own unique challenges because of the sensitivity of the topic that principally bothers on peace and human rights education. Holding a focus group discussion of youth workers from different organisations, political affiliations can create the possibility of participants to "talk and to respond to each other, to compare experiences and impressions and to react to what other people in the group say" (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000:46).

• The focus group may be a tense environment for some youth workers who might be afraid to share information about their challenges if such information can be potential dangers to their lives. In the case of Cameroon for instance, youth workers vehemently refused to be part of any focus group discussion as a means of protecting their anonymity not just in the research report
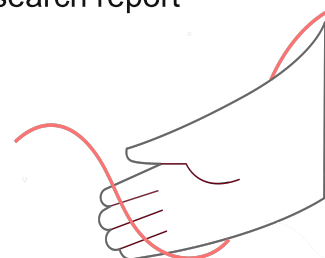
but also against anyone who is not part of the project team. The tense political situation in the two English-speaking regions has made citizens in the North West and South West regions suspicious and afraid to share information regarding the crisis especially if some of the participants are strong critics of the current government of Cameroon.

Sampling and recruitment of participants

Our local research teams from eight countries in four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America) conducted a total of 97 individual and focus group discussions with youth workers. Certain criteria were relevant during the recruitment of participants and they include:

•   Young people (18-35 years) who live and work in the community where the research is conducted

•   Young people working with an NGO/public youth institutions/think tanks/national youth councils etc. on peace and human rights education

Research Tools

One of the main research tools was the use of open-ended topic guides (questionnaires), to enable the study to address the issues raised within the interview process. This is because an open-ended questionnaire allows the facilitators to maintain focus, while allowing flexibility and the introduction of new ideas within the confines of the theoretical framework. The open-ended questionnaire did not only create a space where issues raised in literature can either be confirmed or refuted but it also presented the opportunity to ask, "follow-up questions and pursue topics that are of interest for a considerable length of time" (Berger, 1998: 57). As a result of this, no two interviews were the same as follow up questions were usually asked based on the responses that a participant gave.

Prior to the interviews, consent was obtained from participants for interviews to be recorded. During the interviews, facilitators took down handwritten notes on new issues that emerged from the participant's contributions. This helped the facilitators to note down a pattern of different issues raised and if these issues affirm or deviates from existing literature (Moustakas, 1994).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were of utmost importance to this research. Ethical issues such as informed consent and confidentiality were duly taken into consideration throughout the research. The study ensured that participants made informed consent by providing all potential participants with information sheets and also answering all follow-up questions that they may have. Prior to each interview, participants gave oral or written consent.

It was acknowledged amongst the partners that due to the political circumstances in some localities, it might make participants uncomfortable to sign consent forms that would be kept on record as their official participation in this research. Thus, it was agreed that these participants could choose to give oral consent.

Data Analysis

The interview process was enlightening as the contributions from the participants made it possible to identify which issues raised aligns or deviates from the existing literature. These issues were analysed using thematic analysis while being conscious of Silverman's (2001) suggestion that while it is vital for data analysis to be theoretically informed, it was equally crucial that no data be left unexplored.

The themes represented in this report are those which were repeated and those which were utterly unique to specific localities.
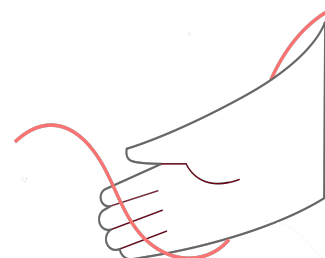
Theoretical framework

A theory can be defined as a set of principles or beliefs that guide practice or a system of ideas intended to explain something. The 21st century has ushered in new waves of horrific forms of violence such as ecocide, genocide, modern warfare, ethnic divisions, racism, xenophobia, gender based violence and more. Many authors and theorists have, over the years, advanced different theories to explain the different forms of violence and provide information about alternatives to violence. The partners found it important to approach the research plan from framework of Peace Education, which aligns well with Building Bridges' overarching aim.

Peace Education Theory

Peace education as defined in this research is a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that enables children, youths and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Fountain, 1999). Peace education can be taught in a formal setting like schools or informal settings like children and youth groups using non-formal education techniques. Harris (2004) describes the five postulates to peace education theory as follows:

1. It explains the root cause and hazardous nature of violence. To do this, it asserts the importance for children and young people learning about the 'other' as a means to deconstruct enemy images such as bias, socialisations be it from race, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliations etc.

2. It teaches alternatives to violence to advance strategies that can be used to address the issues raised in the first postulate. According to these theorists, such strategies include; non violence struggles, reconciliation, negotiation, ratification of treaties and laws protecting people against violence.

3. Peace Education and learning is dynamic in nature, meaning that it adjusts its approach and emphasis to address different types of violence, for example; physical, institutional, structural etc.

4. Peace is a process that varies depending on the context, so peace education practice must be embedded within a specific time/space, rather than just in theory.

5. Peace is omnipresent. While peace educators cannot eliminate conflicts, peace education practice can empower children and young people with the skills to manage conflicts.

There has been some controversy surrounding the name 'peace education'. Some schools of thought argue that 'peace' as a concept implies the withdrawal from the world into an inner sphere of peace and serenity. To this school of thought, the name 'peace' represents passivity that may not be attractive for activists whose role is to confront structural inequalities. Other critical voices argue that it is challenging to advocate for peace education in a world where humans are inherently selfish, continuously waging wars and divisive mechanisms that destroy the planet and all that lives on it (Harris, 2004). According to this argument, only a strong monarch or state government can keep order in the world and this may not necessarily be peaceful. Thus they don't see the need for peace education that they term as some sort of 'appeasement education' (Harris, 2004:8). Other arguments dislike the use of 'peace education' because they see it as reducing the threat of war without tackling interpersonal and cultural conflicts. The term 'peace' has also been used in many different religious teachings with connotations that make it controversial especially when peace education is taught to young people from different backgrounds.

Peace education provides a holistic perspective to understanding peace, what it is, why it does not exist and how to achieve it (Groff, 2002). This includes teaching about the challenges of achieving peace, developing non-violent skills and promoting peaceful attitudes. We chose to approach this project from a peace education perspective due to the international context of this project. We find it important that the practice of peace education is time and space specific, and thus we find it to be a useful framework to approach this research from, as it allows the researchers and participants the space to express their understandings of their local contexts and human rights within those contexts.
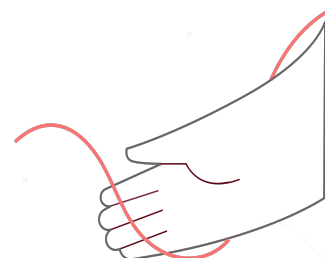
Concluding Remarks

The research and reporting process for this report required the Building Bridges partners to be reflective about the work we aim to do and who we hope that it empowers. Rather than our consultations with young people being merely symbolic, we hope to represent their experiences and reflections and use this knowledge to ensure that our approach and work is as impactful as possible.

This report should form a basis for future project work on themes of Peace and Human Rights education. Additionally, we hope that the research process and report can guide the youth workers involved in Building Bridges to implement their follow up regional projects based on the realities of the communities where the projects will be implemented.

Chapter two

Literature review

This chapter outlines existing literature and secondary data on youth work, human rights and peace education in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. We hope to use this research, which details the experiences of young people who work in the localities described in this literature, to critically analyse human rights and peace narratives. To do so, the following sub-sections briefly outline some popular discourses on 'Human Rights' and 'Peace' in legislation, and on a national level in some of the countries where our partners are located.

Human Rights

Human rights are basic rights belonging to people, inherently as part of their very existence from the moment they are born until the day they die (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2019). These rights exist irrespective of an individual's nationality, race, sexual orientation, and political and religious affiliations. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2019), examples of human rights include;

- Rights to life
- Freedom and liberty
- Freedom of worship/ religious affiliations
- Freedom to control what happens to your body
- Shelter
- Health care
- Education

History of Human Rights

The idea for 'human rights' emerged in Europe in response to the Second World War and the Holocaust. The United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, an international document that outlines the fundamental rights and freedoms of all human beings (Ait Kaci, 2015). The idea of this document is to prevent future conflicts, and to promote peace between nations and peoples. The UDHR now has a profound influence on governments and institutions response to conflict and drafting of policies to promote peace (Ait Kaci, 2015).

Other notable documents calling for the protection of human rights for people have followed since the creation of the UDHR, such as the European Convention of Human Rights (1950), which calls for the protection of human rights for people within the council of Europe including the United Kingdom (Council of Europe, 1950). It is important to acknowledge that these documents are merely aspirtational and ideological, and that to this day people worldwide are not having the standard of rights outlined in the aforementioned documents met, and further there are people who continue to experience gross violations of their rights worldwide.

Principles of human rights

There are some fundamental principles that guide the practice of human rights, which provide some guidance for states and institutions which protect people, and act to ensure that peoples' rights are met to a reasonable extent. Some of these principles are highlighted below.

1. Universality and Inalienability

Human rights are universal and inalienable, meaning that all people everywhere in the world are entitled to these rights irrespective of their race, sexuality, political or religious beliefs. The universality of human rights is embodied in article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (1948). In addition to its universal nature, the inalienability of human rights stipulates that human rights are applicable unto a person from birth to death (Nasr, 2016)

2. Indivisibility

Human rights are indivisible. This means that human rights are linked to the dignity of people, and cannot be separated from that. Additionally, human rights cannot be positioned in any hierarchical order based on our perception of their 'value', irrespective of their nature be it social, economic, political, cultural or civil issues. For example, a person's right to health cannot be compromised at the expense of their education (Nasr, 2016)

3. Interrelatedness and Interdependence

 By their very nature, human rights are interrelated and interdependent, and they cannot be separated because each one of them contributes to the achievement of a person's dignity (United Nations, 1993. So, fulfilling one of these rights depends partly or completely upon the fulfilment of the others. For instance, the fulfilment of the rights to health may depend on the fulfilment of the right to developing good health policies, building of hospitals and promotion of timely health information (UN office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2008).

4. Participation and Inclusion

All people everywhere in the world have the right to participate in the decision-making process of their communities, countries, nations and continents. Participation is an important part of human right as decision-making processes impacts the lives and well-being of people (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). It is therefore necessary for rights-based approaches to implement a bottom-top or community-based approach to decision making, which encourages the participation of communities, civil societies, minorities, migrants, refugees, young people, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable and oppressed groups.

5. Accountability and Rule of Law

States and other duty bearers should be held accountable for their observance of human rights within their jurisdictions (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). They are bound to comply with the rules enshrined in different international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the event that states and other duty bearers fail to respect human rights, victims of human rights abuses have the right to initiate proceedings before a competent institution for appropriate redress of their grievances in accordance with the rules and proceedings provided by the law (United Nations Population Fund, 2005).. The duty to hold governments accountable for human rights abuses does not only rest with the aggrieved party but also with the media, civil society and the international community as well.
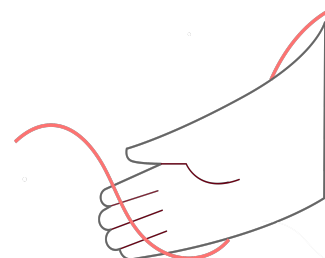
Human Rights situation at the country level

Despite the emergence of the concept of 'human rights' and the documents which outline and specify them in the late 1940s, we have since witnessed both active violations of human rights perpetuated by the very same governments and institutions who drafted the legislation, and the failure of governments and institutions to protect people and actualise their fundamental rights outlined in the documents. Unfortunately, the existence of these international documents on human rights continues to be threatened by the existence of wars, violence and conflicts fuelled by capitalism, inequality, neo-colonialism, and xenophobia. Below, we have briefly outlined the human situations in the countries where this study was conducted.

Ghana

The Republic of Ghana is located in West Africa, boarding on Burkina Faso to the North, Ivory Coast to the West and Togo to the East. Ghana was the first sub-Saharan country to gain its independence from the British colonial forces in 1957. Ghana's fourth constitution was unanimously approved in 1992, and enshrined in it is a reference to the fundamental rights humans are entitled to. This can be seen in Article 12[2], which states that "[e]very person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed, or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedom of others and for the public interest" person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status" (1996). This stipulation is influenced by international provisions for human rights. Moreover, the constitution declares that these rights are enforceable by Ghanaian courts.

In Ghana, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice has

"…the broad mandate to protect universal human rights and freedoms, especially those vested in the Constitution, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights" (Human Rights

Watch, 2001). The Commission works to actualise the human rights agenda in Ghana through public education activities, including the media, debates and workshops, rural community outreach programmes and school.

In Ghana, the National Youth Authority (NYA) established in 1974, formally called the National youth council (NYC), is an agency within the Ministry of Youth and Sports is responsible for coordinating and facilitating youth development activities in Ghana. In 2010, Ghana adopted its first youth policy. The theme of the policy is "towards an empowered youth, impacting positively on national development" and it covers 19 areas, including: Education & Skills Training; Youth in Modern Agriculture; Gender Mainstreaming; Youth in Conflict Prevention & Peace-Building" (National Youth Authority, 2010). However with criticism of little involvement of Ghanaian youth in its formulation, NYA has commenced regional consultations across the country to elicit inputs from youth groups and key identifiable stakeholders towards the policy (Asante Attakora, 2018). For the past years, the policy has also struggled to see the light of day due to funding challenges and delays in getting a proper legal instrument to ensure its smooth roll out (Heathcote, 2018).

Ghana has an active civil society, with several youth and student organisations. Many of these are organised under the Federation of Youth Associations in Ghana (FEDYAG). FEDYAG brings together more than 150 national youth associations, including governmental and non-governmental youth organisations. The federation seeks to unite youth clubs and organisations and allow them to share their common interests and work together in developmental programs, promote human rights and civic responsibility, encourage youth leadership and build capacity in the youth development field, and to promote the general welfare of youth (Kuagbenu, 2012). However the group has no online presence and its mobilisation power is not well recognised and respected within the civil society in Ghana. In terms of budgeting and spending, the 2014 estimates for the budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, "Youth Services" allocated was GHS 10.2 million (USD 3.7 million) (National Youth Authroity, 2014). And in 2017, the Ministry was given a budget of GHS 46, 910, 275 for its activities but was cut by 30% in the year 2018. However, Vague commitments and non-measurable activities hamper efforts in tracking and assessing the real impact made, as far as youth development is concerned, by the government (Asamani, 2018). As well as several instances of duplication of efforts between the various ministries, NYA and other special initiatives.
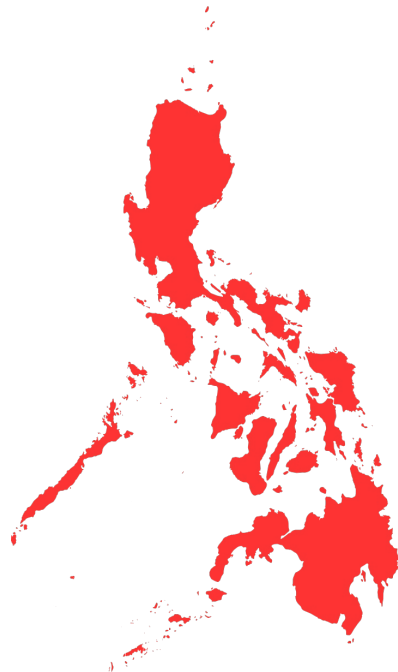
Mindanao, Phlippines

Mindanao is the second largest of the Philippine Islands, at the South of the archipelago. Its landscape is diverse, ranging from mountains to wide plain areas, and agriculturally rich, with timber and mineral resources as well (Borlaza and Hernandez, 2020). Mindanao has been settled since prehistoric times through successive waves of immigration. Muslim traders reached Sulu, one of the smaller islands to Mindanao's southwest, in the thirteenth century and established a sultanate there (Borlaza and Hernandez, 2020). In the fifteenth century they converted native people on the island of Mindanao itself and established the Sultanate of Maguindanao. From Mindanao Muslim traders moved north through the archipelago as far as Manila. The Spanish arrived in 1521 and were amazed to find Muslims there (Cagoco-Guiam and Macapado, 1999). They had just completed the 'Reconquista' in the Iberian Peninsula, driving out the Muslims, or 'Moros', as they called them. This became the name they applied to the Muslims they encountered in the archipelago, which they named the "Philippines" in honor of King Philip II of Spain (Cagoco-Guiam and Macapado, 1999).

The Moros resisted the colonisation by the Spaniards on a sporadic basis, but the Spaniards made little effort to consolidate their hold on Mindanao until the nineteenth century. In the Filipino War of Independence at the end of the nineteenth century, the Moros hoped that they

would win their independence from both the Filipinos in the North as well as the Spaniards (Borlaza and Hernandez, 2020). When the Philippines were ceded to the United States, they continued their efforts to become independent. The Americans set up a military occupation of the island, which led to much stronger resistance. The US government also developed a Resettlement Program, aimed at exploiting the agricultural, timber, and minerals wealth of Mindanao, by sending thousands of Christian Filipinos from the Visayas and elsewhere into Mindanao. Before that time, Mindanao was relatively sparsely populated, with Moros along the western half of the island, and indigenous peoples (called collectively Lumads) in other parts. By the mid-twentieth century, the demographics of the population had shifted dramatically. Mindanao was now 63 percent settlers, 32 percent Moro, and 5 percent Lumad. With the coming of independence from the Americans in 1946, the struggle for the Moros was now twofold: independence from the rest of the Philippines, but even more importantly, reclaiming what they felt was their homeland. Armed conflict between the Moros and the Armed Forces of the Philippines became more intense. In 1969 a professor at the University of the Philippines founded the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the fighting intensified after Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law (1972-1986). Huge numbers of civilians were displaced from their homes by the fighting (Gonzalez et al, 2004).

In 1990, an agreement was reached between the MNLF and the government to set up a territory in the western and northern part of Mindanao over which the Moros would have limited autonomy from Manila. It was known as the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) (Minorities at Risk Project, 2004). But internal divisions within factions of the liberation front, and a splinter group from the MNLF formed, called the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which resumed armed conflict with the Armed Forces. In the meantime a more radical group was begun by two brothers from a Christian-Muslim family from the islands off the coast of Mindanao. This group, called Abu Sayyaf, reportedly had al-Quaeda connections and burnt towns and engaged in kidnapping and beheading of prisoners (Donohoe, 2002). They have menaced the southwestern part of Mindanao and made international headlines for their taking foreign hostages (often tourists or foreign aid workers) and demanding ransom (Donohoe, 2002). In 2000 President Joseph Estrada declared an all-out war against the MILF, and fighting reached a new intensity. An estimated 930,000 people were displaced in the cycle of violence and attempted peace talks that have followed since then (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre,

2008). In 2012 a Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (Moro Nation) was begun between the Government and the MILF (Head, 2013). The process was disrupted in 2013 with an attack by a rogue group of the MNLF in Zamboanga City that displaced more than 100 000 people, with over 1,000 homes and small businesses destroyed or severely damaged Oliver, 2013). In March 2014, however, a peace agreement was completed, giving greater autonomy for governance and collecting taxes to the Bangsamoro (International Crisis Group, 2019). The Bangsamoro Organic Law, Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro marks a significant peace agreement of the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (International Crisis Group, 2019). However, the New People's Army (a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist group operating in the northern part of Mindanao), as well as what is left of the MNLF, have not been party to the peace agreement (International Crisis Group, 2019). There is also some clan conflict still active that further endangers the peace. But there is considerable agreement that the launching of the Bangsamoro will mitigate the worst of the violence that the people of Mindanao have been enduring for more than a century (Robert Schreiter, 2015).
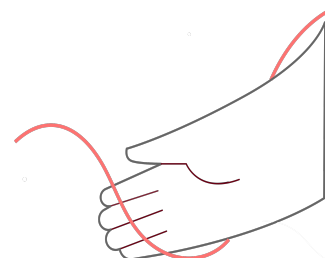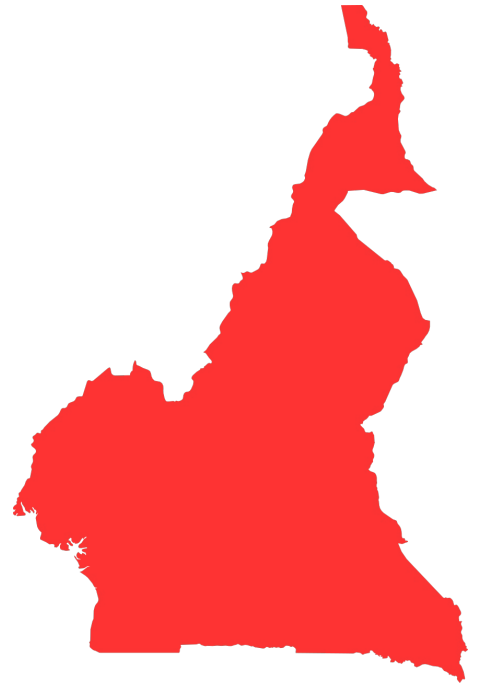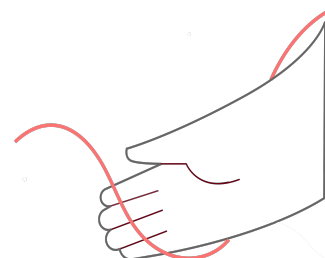
Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is a country located in Central Africa bordered in the west and North by Nigeria, to the East by Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, to the North East by Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south (Vircoulon, 2015). Currently, the country is experiencing clashes between secessionist groups and the government forces in the two Anglophone regions of the North West and South-West regions of Cameroon (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2018). The country also continues to suffer attacks from the radical Islamic group Boko Haram who attack the population based on their radical ideology that 'western education is bad' (Kindzeka, 2020).

The current socio-political crisis known as the Anglophone crisis is a colonial legacy that can be traced back to the colonisation of Cameroon by the Germans, British and the French (Ndil, 2014). In September 2017, separatist groups in the English speaking regions of Cameroon (North West and South-West regions) declared the English region an independent state of 'Ambazonia' leading to a deadly clash ever since with the Cameroon government (International Crisis Group, 2017). The main grievances have been the continuous marginalisation of Anglophones in the country perpetuated by the Biya regime amidst accusations of corruption, poverty and election fraud (Kiven and Laclean, 2018). The absence of genuine political will and a transparent process of negotiation and dialogue has further radicalised young people who feel that violence is the only way for their voices to be heard (International Crisis Group, 2017). All

attempts at peaceful negotiations with the Biya regime failed in 2016 and 2017 when security forces used excessive force against peaceful protests organised by lawyers, teachers and students in the two regions (International Crisis Group, 2017). The demonstrations called for increased autonomy for Anglophones in the regions, criticised the exploitation, marginalisation and discrimination of Anglophone minority by the Francophone dominated government (International Crisis Group, 2017). The Biya government responded to these demonstrations by using live bullets on protesters, including from helicopters, leading to injuries and death. Some of the leaders of the protests, opposition leaders and critical voices of the Biya regime who are connected to the Anglophone crisis were arrested, tortured and illegally detained in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon (Krippahl, 2019).

Afraid to participate in public protests, young people in the Anglophone regions took the protests off the streets and unto the internet by documenting the atrocities of the Cameroon army burning villages, raiding student hostels, raping female students and using live bullets on citizens (Krippahl, 2019). To deflate this tension, and conceal its gross human rights violations, the Biya government shut down Internet in the two Anglophone regions for 9 months making it the longest Internet ban in Africa (Dahir, 2017). In October 2017, separatist leaders declared independence of the North West and South-West regions stating that it is the formation of a new nation called the federal republic of Ambazonia (International Crisis Group, 2017). The separatists called for the shutdown of schools and the use of Ghost towns (every Monday) as a means of civil disobedience to force the Biya regime to adhere to their demands. Separatists' attacks on security forces have drastically increased since the deportation of 47 secessionist leaders including the interim president of 'Ambazonia' from Nigeria in January 2018. This has led to loss in human lives and property following military raids and clashes with 'Ambazonian' fighters, 106 villages have been raided, burned down and inhabitants have either partially or completely deserted the villages (BBC, 2018).

The Cameroon forces are not the only group violating the rights of Cameroonians. There have been reports of secessionist groups attacking and kidnapping students, threatening teachers from going to school as a means to reinforce school boycotts in the two Anglophone regions. The pressure tactics forced the majority of schools to close during the 2016-2017 academic year, and as of May 2018 an estimated 42,500 children were still out of school, according to UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Most schools did not re-open in 2018.

Another instance of the disrespect of human rights in Cameroon is the demonisation of LGBTQ people. The Cameroon's penal code penalises "sexual relations between persons of the same sex" up to five years in imprisonment. Police and gendarmes continued to carry out arrests and harassment of people they believe to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Other vulnerable groups like girls and women continue to suffer from harmful traditional practices that disempowers them such as child early and forced marriages, rape culture, breast ironing, money woman phenomenon etc.

Peru

In Peru, there is an advisory body in charge of formulating and proposing state policies on youth issues, as well as promoting and supervising programs and projects for the benefit of young people. The National Secretariat for Youth (SENAJU) of the Ministry of Education aims to contribute to the integral development of Peruvian youth in employability issues, improvement of quality of life, social inclusion, participation, and access to spaces in all areas of human development. SENAJU achieves this by articulating, coordinating and evaluating policies, plans, programs and projects of the public sector, private entities and civil society within the framework of compliance with the National Youth Policies contemplated in Supreme Decree No. 027-2007-PCM.

In Peru, violent protests against mines and other large-scale projects are sometimes answered by the use of firearms by the security forces, causing serious injuries and even the death of civilians. Despite this, the official investigations of these deaths and injuries, for the most part, are inadequate. Nearly 70,000 people were victims of forced disappearances or died during the armed conflict that took place in Peru between 1980 and the year 2000. Many suffered atrocities by Sendero Luminoso and other insurgent groups. Advances in judicial investigations into serious human rights violations committed during the 20-year armed conflict are still slow and
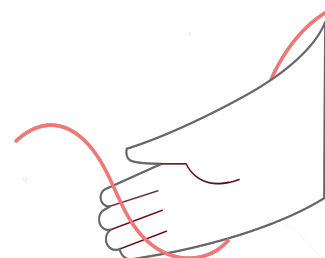
limited. However, former President Alberto Fujimori was sentenced in 2009 to 25 years in prison for disappearances and murders that occurred between 1991 and 1992. Since then, the courts have repeatedly denied the appeals filed to have his sentence overturned.

Between January and September of 2015, 12 civilians died from gunshot wounds after police allegedly used firearms against demonstrators. These events occurred despite the existence of a police regulation that came into force in the first month of 2015, which prohibits security forces from using lethal weapons during public order operations. In April of the same year, police officers attributed false evidence to a protester detained, allegedly for participating in violent acts during a protest against mining activities in the province of Islay (Arequipa). Following this, in July 2015, the Constitutional Court ruled that military courts could not prosecute soldiers accused of perpetrating abuses against civilians during public security operations. This was ruled despite a 2014 change to the penal code, which repealed provisions that gave impunity subject to the use of lethal force by the police, observing the relevant regulations. In August 2015, the then president Ollanta Humala, issued a decree that limits the use of force by the police. This decree stipulates that the police should only use lethal force when it is "strictly necessary" in the face of a "real or imminent danger" of death or serious injury.

In response to these events, the international organisation Human Rights Watch (HMR) in its 'World Report 2016' listed a series of human rights violations around the globe, where the Ibero-American region is severely affected. Specifically in Peru, it is worth mentioning the death at the hands of police officers of several protesters who oppose mining projects in the country, such as that of 'Tía María' were devastating.

Paraguay

Paraguay is the South American country with the longest dictatorial regime, one led by Alfredo Stroessner for almost 35 years, from August 1954 to February 1989. The end of Stroessner's rule was marked by the commencement of a 'democratic openness' in Paraguay, and in June 1992 a new constitution was adopted to establish a government based on checks and balances which ended up providing a fundamental power to the Legislative branch. Since then, Paraguay has achieved advances in terms of civil and political freedoms. Nevertheless, the process of democratic consolidation in Paraguay is still confronted with numerous, deep-rooted challenges. Political, legal and administrative institutions are weak and high levels of corruption remain. The 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Paraguay in 135th place on the list of 180 countries with a score of 29, and the survey's ranking of trust in governmental institutions shows alarming citizen's lack of confidence in the democratic institutions. In this sense, the Latinobarometro's 2017 regional survey indicates that only seventeen percent of respondents claimed to have trust in the Electoral Tribunal, the central body responsible for ensuring electoral integrity and only ten percent said they trust political parties and Parliament. Paraguay has shown a backlash on the accomplishment of fundamental rights in the past few years, quite behind in comparison to other South American countries (International IDEA, 2018). The main aspects related to this deficit are linked to the access of justice and social rights and equality. Access to justice is still very expensive for the most vulnerable sectors of the population and is very low the enforcement predictability which usually is related to the impartial administration of justice that is
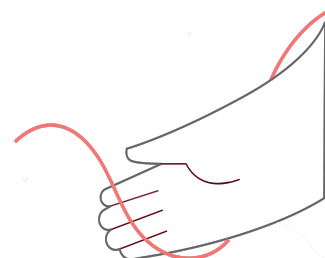
mainly in the hands of the hegemonic party ruling the country. In terms of gender equality and politics, the political sphere is still a place remaining in the hands of men where women only hold 17% of the Senate's seats. In 2018, the passing of the Gender Parity Law was not possible due to a strong campaign mainly coming from Christian and anti-rights organisations. Additionally, in terms of social inequality, indigenous peoples continue to be denied their rights to land and to free, prior and informed consent on projects affecting them.
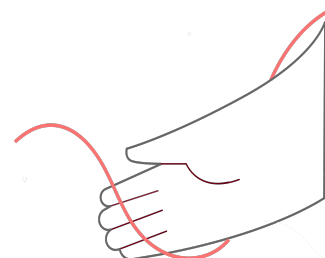
Belgium

According to the Kingdom of Belgium's Foreign Affairs Ministry, the promotion and protection of human rights is a priority for Belgium, both at the national level and in the relations with other countries (Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, 2016). It has been expressly laid down as such in the coalition agreement of the current government (Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, 2016). Some priority themes in the area of human rights as highlighted by Belgium are: the abolition of the death penalty, the protection of the rights of women, children and defenders of human rights, the fight against all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the fight against impunity (Kingdom of Belgium Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, 2016).

At the international level, Belgium is perceived to play a pioneering role with respect to human rights. For example: in 1996, Belgium was the first country in Western Europe which banned the death penalty from criminal law, whether in peace time or in war time. Belgium was also a founding member of the Council of Europe, and from 2009 to 2012 it was a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Belgium applied a second time for obtaining a seat during the period 2016-2018. In 2011, within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a peer review mechanism of the UNHRC, Belgium had to answer questions about its human rights practices. Furthermore, Belgium made the voluntary commitment to submit in September 2013 an interim report on the observance of the 88 recommendations it has agreed with within the framework of the UPR.

We find it important to acknowledge here that while Belgium is widely perceived by the international community as a positive force in the field of human rights, its colonial history encompasses many well-documented atrocities from forced labour in rubber plantations to mutilation and brutality in the Congo Free State (today the Democratic Republic of the Congo), under the rule of King Leopold II in the late 19th-century, until the abduction of thousands of mixed-race children between 1959 and 1962, which formally received an apology by Prime Minister Charles Michel only in 2019.

Belgium lies at the heart of Europe and the headquarters to the EU, Belgium has all the spotlights on itself. Yet, violations of human rights continue in different fields and forms for different fragments of the population.

According to the Amnesty International Human Right Violations 2017-2018 Report of Belgium, prison conditions remained poor; hundreds of offenders with mental health problems or mental disabilities continued to be detained in inadequate prison wards. Several laws on professional secrecy introduced requirements for social workers to share private information regarding potential suspects of terrorism-related offences (Amnesty International, 2018). Parliament introduced a number of restrictions to asylum and migration laws (Amnesty International, 2018). A new law on legal gender recognition improved the rights of transgender people (Amnesty International, 2018).
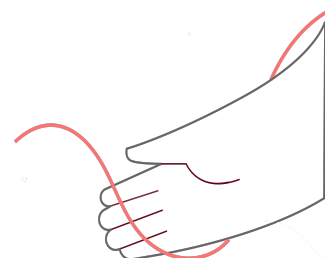
Although Belgium has greatly contributed to the political construction of Europe, it still has ongoing conflict between the two main linguistic groups: Flemings, who inhabit the northern part of the country and speak Flemish, and French-speakers or Francophones, who mainly live in Wallonia (the south of Belgium) and Brussels (which is geographically located in Flanders but is predomin antly French speaking). According to the research made by Rimé et al, surveying three generations of Dutch- and French-speakers, they observed generational differences consistent with their expectation: Younger generations demonstrated less consensus concerning the date of onset of the conflict, expressed a reduced perception of victimisation of the in-group and an increased perception of victimisation of the out group. This might indicate that young people in Belgium are less affected by any kind of conflicts amongst the regions.

Peace, young people, youth policy and youth work

Promoting peace and human rights means contemplating a peaceful future, thinking about better ways for different groups to coexist, initiating processes to address the root causes of conflict, analysing past and ongoing grievances, and implementing actions for more stability and justice. But can a peaceful future like the one envisaged above really be achieved without involving youth?

To continue to analyse the impacts of violence on youth and the role young people have in peace building, it is essential that we define the category 'Youth' within the context of this study. Different institutions and countries have different definitions of what youth means to them. International bodies like the United Nations as defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15-24 years without any prejudice to any other definition. The European Commission on its part considers youth to be form 15-29 years old, while the African Union on the other hand through its African Union Charter defines youth as from 15 – 35 years old. For the purpose of this study, we consider youth to be young people between the ages of 15-35 years that combines the definitions of the European Commission and the African Union.

The international community's increased attention to the role of peace education to combat conflict corresponds with the increasing popular view that young people are vital actors in sustainable peace building. Systematic violence- whether physical, structural, economic, etc- directly or indirectly impacts on young people who are exposed to it, in conflict-affected areas and in regions we might consider 'peaceful'. However, the impact of violence on young people should not be the only reason they are included in peace building discourses. The sheer demographic population, as well as the positive contributions of young people today across the globe, are other indicators that this vulnerable group should no longer be excluded from peace and human rights processes.

There are more young people across the globe today than there has ever been in human history. In 2015, there were 1.2 billion youth globally between the ages of 15-24 years old accounting for 1 out of every 6 people worldwide (United Nations Deparment of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Today the population of young people currently stands at 1.8 billion out of the total 7.3 billion people inhabiting the earth. This demographic advantage should be an incentive why young people ought to be involved by world leaders and policy makers in conflict and peace processes.

While research has made a link between high youth population and a higher statistical risk of armed conflict, these findings are not straightforward predictor of violence. Other factors aside from demographics make young people vulnerable to violence and armed conflict such as; gross human rights violations, repressive governments, resource scarcity, high levels of unemployment, lack of access to quality education, affordable health care and basic amenities, high levels of inequalities between ethnic groups are all contributing factors on why young people are forced to participate in violence across the world.

The underrepresentation of young people in human rights and peace processes makes analysis challenging, targeted programming impossible and takes attention away from the realities suffered by young people in both conflict and post conflict settings. The type of violence suffered by young people both in what we might consider conflict settings and in 'peaceful' settings is highly gendered, racialised and dependent on other socio-economic factors. For instance, young people are both perpetuators and victims of violence and the type of violence that they suffer is highly gendered. Young men between the ages of 15-29 years are four times more likely to be killed than women. The media also plays a role in the general demonisation of young people, especially young males who are perceived as threats and thought to be mobilised by terrorist groups or rebel leaders, a narrative usually built on ethnic or racial stereotypes.

While young people have been known to contribute negatively to violence, they can also be mobilised for good. As stated above, young people have the advantage of numbers that alone should justify the inclusion and consideration of young people in policy making and planning of peace processes. Youth are often the majority in countries affected by armed conflict and therefore should be central to discussions on peace and inclusive societies. In order to overcome societal divisions and to promote societal inclusion, we need young people to take the lead as societal innovators.

Concluding Remarks

We have examined some existing literature on human rights, peace and youth work across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America to lay a foundation which we will compare and contrast our results with.
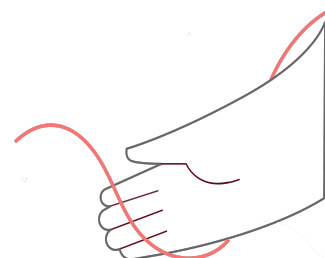
Chapter three

Presentation of interview results

In this chapter of the study, we present some of the key findings of face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions carried out by our local research teams in all the countries participating in the study between November 2018 and April 2019. The research teams collected, translated and transcribed the data from their research, and began to categorise the content based on themes or issues raised. All of the local teams translated and transcribed the data collected in their country and read the transcripts several times to familiarise with the content and the issues raised. It is important to include that in reading, familiarising and thematising the data, we placed weight onto issues that were repeated, or if the relevant literature (presented above) refers to it or deviates from it. We equally paid attention to aspects of the data that were new and considered them important if the participants explicitly said that they were important aspects worthy to note. After this thorough process, the following themes emerged, and these themes can be used to understand youth work, human rights and peace education especially from the perspectives of youth workers in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

Youth Workers on Youth Work

Most of the youth workers that we interviewed gave different views of what they consider as youth work. For starters, a UK participant living in Brussels said there is no "there is no clear definition. It is both perceived as a professionalised vocation and voluntary field. Working with young people so that they can get involved in the society. It includes both formal and non-formal ways. Most of the sector is coordinated by volunteers". Participants from Belgium and Finland equally shared this perspective. Some of the participants from Paraguay and Ghana defined youth work as "engaging and working proactively with the younger generation towards resolving issues that may or may not necessarily directly affect them in the future; from climate change issues to the new bill that lowers the criminal age to 9yrs. The older generations, teachers, activists, politicians, and parents need to understand that the youth are smarter, stronger, and more resilient than they assume; sheltering the youth from social and political issues will not only make them ignorant and affect society at large, but also make them more vulnerable in the long

run" while for others in Indonesia, it is simply "work that advocates for the right of youth. It involves in working towards improving the well-being of the youth".

For a French youth worker living in Belgium, there is no limit to youth work as long as it is "any kind of work working with young people". Another Brussels based youth worker originally from Serbia went further to add that youth work is an "opportunity to learn outside very defined state-based curricula. In formal education many issues are not covered. It is based on non-formal education. Have certain values such as democracy, respect of human rights, non-violence, and sustainability. Value based education". Another youth worker in the Philippines added that the youth work also encompasses "doing different things from organising to campaigning to lobbying to political work for developing a youth stake in social activities".

Youth Workers on Peace Education

The study found out that the respondents from across the world had different yet similar perspectives oi what peace education is about. 80% of the respondents said that peace education is education that aims to transform the mindsets of people and communities as a tool to curb violence. In Cameroon, a youth worker originally from the South West region based in Yaoundé said, "Peace education is a process of being in peace with yourself and your society". Additionally, a Phillipines based youth worker shared that peace education for her is "teaching people peace. It is looking at a conflict in a perspective of peace. It involves changing mindsets of people on conflict, conflict management, and violent extremism. It also doesn't just deal with the external, but also internal peace". This line of thought was echoed by another youth worker in the Philippines who argued "peace education is an important pillar of education because it teaches how to be peaceful on the inside which will then translate to the works in the community, the nation, and the international level".

The definitions highlighted by the participants were particularly interesting to the researchers, as there is limited literature on internal peace as a valid and important part of peace education. Most of the literature about peace education focused on external factors without taking into consideration internal peace and how our own internal perceptions and experiences impact on
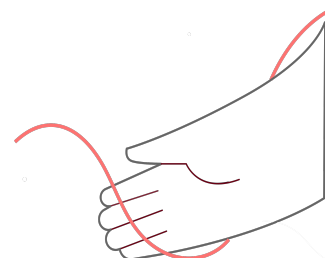
our overall state of mind and perspective on peace as much as external factors. Above all, participants felt that peace education helps people from different groups to live together in harmony. For example, a Ghanaian youth worker feels that peace education "makes people see the essence of living in harmony, teaching how to tolerate people without any grudges". A Serbian participant based in Belgium added that peace education "is more than educating people on how to avoid conflict". According to this participant, it is important that peace education starts at a very early age, so that young people have the tools to engage with and reflect on their own human rights as well as the rights of others. This way, they can adjust their behaviour, understanding that their action has consequences on them as well as the people around them. Furthermore, other participants advocated the need to start teaching peace education in schools, clubs and youth centres shifting from a theory base to a practical approach incorporating non formal education and participatory approaches as articulated by a participant from Greece, who thinks that "it's really important to start with the schools, to make this a topic at school, to inform about Human Rights. And then also have some kind of practical learning". According to a Finnish participant in Belgium, peace should not only be taught in schools but at home as well, stating that peace education "should start in a very early age, when you are older then it is easier to analyse... Parents should also talk with their kids about peace".

The participants' thoughts on Peace Education are generally reflected in the literature on peace education theory, in that it aims to equip young people with the values, skills and knowledge to empower them to bring about societal change and to work through conflict peacefully, as well as promoting peace on an individual, regional, national, international and structural level.

**Youth Workers on Human Rights**

Most of the youth workers that were interviewed had a comprehensive understanding of youth work, human rights and peace education. In the research conducted in the Philippines, one youth worker defined human rights as "a set of conditions people should have in order to live their lives to achieve their most potential and to have well-being". A second person said that "Human rights are rights that a person has regardless of their class, gender, status, religion, among other things. Basically, it is how people should be treated simply because they are

humans". A further participant, based in Brussels but from France, also defined human rights as "basic rights of every human being, everyone should respect, minimum definition of rights". While a Cameroonian youth worker based in the South Western Limbe, stated that "human rights means treating everyone equally, providing access to good health, education, shelter, good drinking water and respecting the dignity of people". Despite being based in different corners of the world and living in very different realities, the youth workers' understanding of the principle of human rights seems to be quite universal. These definitions are also reflected in literature on human rights.

Human Rights in Theory, Not Practice

All of the participants felt that despite there being numerous conventions on human rights and agencies to honour them, human rights are threatened in their respective countries by corruption, violence, despotic leaders who will do all they can to remain in power. As such the youth workers that we talked to felt that while their governments have ratified different international treaties and human rights instruments, these claims are largely theoretical and no effort is made to respect and put them in practice. As captured from the interviews of a British participant in Brussels, she explained that in the United Kingdom, "there is lack of understanding about human rights. It is a formality. What is the point of a convention if you don't put it into practice?"

The participants from the Philippines feared that "With the current political status, I think that they (human rights) are in much danger". According to them, "The human rights situation in this country is alarming because the justice system here is not functioning the way it should be and is not reaching its full potential. This then translates to a society which is full of crimes, fear, and injustice". According to these respondents, "Human rights and peace education is a work in tandem. I think one cannot stand without the other. We need balance. Here in our context, human rights are not properly implemented especially in Iligan City. Many are deprived from the delivery of basic services of the government. I myself is a victim. Many government officials at the higher positions neglected the needs of the people and the communities. Yes there is human right but it did not worked well. It still needs more focus and promotion especially to the leaders of the government". This is further reinforced by "a long history of conflict. There's historical and cultural conflict in the Philippines, in different levels. There's ideological conflict between the communist rebels and the government. There's a historical conflict between
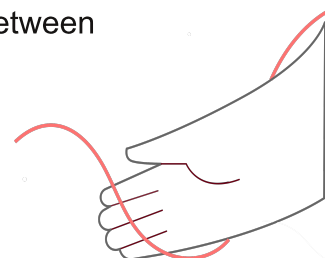
indigenous peoples and the government".

Evidence from the desktop research conducted in all the countries contained beautiful narratives of how these countries recognise and some of them have ratified international human rights treaties and documents such as Universal Declaration of human Rights, CEDAW and other national human rights instruments enshrined in the constitutions of these countries. However, the accounts of youth workers during the face-to-face interviews in these countries agreed the respective governments don't respect these principles even though they have ratified them. For instance, Cameroon ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on August 23 1994 yet women in the country continues to suffer from harmful cultural practices like the 'Money Woman Phenomenon' breast ironing, child, early and forced marriages, under representation of women in decision making positions etc. Also, the constitution of Cameroon states that the country shall adhere to the principles enshrined by the League of Nations (United Nations organisation) that clearly upholds human rights. Contrary to what is stated in the constitution, the youth workers that we talked stated that there are gross evidence of human rights violations following the on-going Anglophone crisis where government troops are using excessive force on opposition leaders as well as civilians. Opposition leaders and other critics of governments and totalitarianism in most of the countries continue to be arbitrarily arrested, illegally detained and tortured. There were numerous accounts of villages and houses being burnt down military causing death and internal displacement etc. Finally the country also penalises gays and lesbians with imprisonment. We concluded from the study that ratifying human rights treaties and principles is a great PR strategy used by despotic governments who want to appear democratic to the international community and benefit from international grants and financial aids.
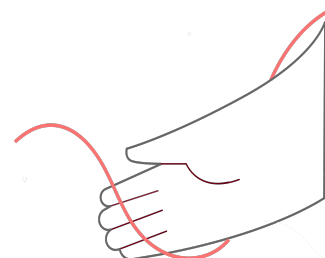
These human rights challenges are not only prevalent in Asia and Africa as highlighted above. There are also human rights challenges in Europe as right-wing extremism is on the rise, the rights of refugees are trampled upon and migration is not always easy. A German youth worker based in Brussels paints a vivid image of the rise of violent extremism in Germany

"There is corruption at some areas. NSU (The National Socialist Underground or NSU was a far-right German neo-Nazi terrorist group which was uncovered in November 2011) is right extremist groups against migrants and refugees. Three of them were found guilty but there are more than 10000 people in the network".

Young people and youth workers are easy targets in conflict areas

One of the most interesting outcomes of both the literature review and the face-to-face interviews is the evidence that young people are not protected against violence. There is little or no literature available about the protection of young people especially those working in conflict or violent settings. One of the Philippines confirmed this as one of them mentioned that "I also worry about my own safety when I work, because sometimes we go to areas where there are a lot of killings, like Caloocan City where there are a lot of extra judicial killings because of Duterte's war on drugs".

Participants interviewed in Cameroon made similar concerns to those of Philippines. Health workers who are mostly young people working with international displaced populations in the Anglophone regions are targeted by both military and secessionist groups who either shoot them for treating wounded people from opposite camps of the conflicts or simply burn down hospitals with patients and workers in it. This was summarised by a youth worker, who stated "I am afraid to go to the office or talk about human rights because I work with an organisation receiving international funds. They might think that I am advocating for peace because I want the government to remain in power. If they can burn the Kumba hospital and shoot down health workers, no one is safe".

Access to Human Rights and Peace Education for young people

Peace and Human Rights Education in formal education

Out of a total of 97 youth workers interviewed individually or through focus group discussions: 54 of the youth workers said that they have never received any form of human rights and peace education what so ever, while 43 of them said they had received some form of training either from a formal institution like a university or through NGOs. Evidence from both the literature review and interviews indicates that there are few or no human rights and peace education programs designed to equip young people to deal with violence in their communities. Also evident from the face-to-face interviews is the fact that the participants who indicated that they had participated in a peace and human rights education program did so as a module in their university course. Despite this, few human rights and peace education programs are often provided as introductory programs for courses in formal education as expressed by a youth worker from the Philippines

"One thing that I have encountered was when we were having a workshop on peace. Peace is a concept that I know in an academic way but it was so difficult for me to explain it to the little kids in such a way that they would understand them, basically, to connect to the people". Equally important from the interviews was that with the available human rights/peace trainings made available by formal academic institutions, there was little or no mention about scholarships or other fees waivers to facilitate the enrolment of young people into these programs.

Peace and Human Rights Education in non-formal education

It was noted in the face to face interviews that most of the youth workers who had received any form of human rights and peace education were largely from Europe and a few from Latin America, and only youth workers from Europe indicated that they had participated in peace and human rights education organised by civil society organisations using non-formal education approaches. One youth worker described this work as "peace education and human rights trainings usually facilitated by non-government organisations. For instance, Countering Violent Extremism was facilitated by Pakigdait. These trainings and workshops based on the pressing issues in the communities". The training they described was about human rights and the United Nations, "but it didn't feel like they were lecturing us about human rights, it was also about human rights-based approach that organisations can adopt. The project taught us that the starting and ending point for all campaigns are the people. People's welfare is an important consideration in all our activities and decisions."

What does Peace and Human Rights Education respond to?

Political Motivations

Some of the participants who had experienced some human rights and peace education trainings available also observed that these trainings are politically motivated. This was captured well by a Peruvian youth worker, who when asked about the political motives behind peace and human rights education replied that "I think yes [there is political motivation], but not mainly. I think that most trainings and discussions right now are about the political situation of the country but not necessarily peace". Another youth worker described the need for youth work stemming from the government's lack of political will, stating that while "even the government are normalising oppression, when people see see corruption, violence, or any kind of conflict, they don't see it as a problem anymore because for them, it's normal". In that vein, youth work on Peace Education is key, to educate and empower young people to organise against conflict and violence.
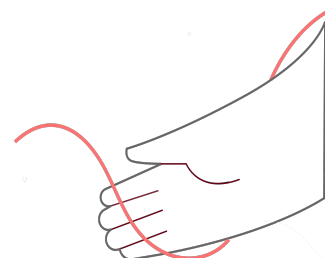
Lack of Intercultural Understanding

It was very evident from our conversations with youth from all the different continents that whether at community, national, regional or international levels, there was increasing tension between different social groups. A participant from Latin America summarised this well, stating that "the challenge is cultural. Cultures are valid and understanding a culture isn't learned in a sit-in and an explanation. The challenge is also personal because I have friends who have other ideological views and working with them can be politically challenging"

All of the participants confirmed that individuals or groups of people that are perceived by other groups as not belonging are targeted and discriminated against. Participants from Cameroon cited the example of the discrimination against Anglophones from the dominant Francophone government, the discrimination of women and girls by patriarchal system and the victimisation of gay and lesbians by the Cameroon Penal code. Participants from the United Kingdom cited the impact of the UK leaving the EU and its far-reaching adverse consequences on human rights, freedom and enabling a far-right agenda. Participants from Germany cited cases of racism as a participant stated "in Germany, some troubles related to racism especially in eastern Germany. Even the police are corrupted. State is not recognising right extremism and terrorists". In all the interviews, it was clear that different group of people women, LGBTQ, Roman, refugees and migrants etc. constantly face rejection, discrimination.

To combat media narratives

A reoccurring theme in this research was that young people don't trust mainstream media.All of the participants who participated in the study irrespective of their nationality, political affiliations, religious beliefs and sexual orientation expressed a complete lack of trust in the media. In the global south, participants expressed frustrations that the media is state own and a political tool of corrupt and draconian governments while in the North, participants felt that mainstream media is furthering the far right agenda by deliberately victimising 'the other' groups such as young people, refugees, Muslims etc choosing to report stories from an angle that further widens the gap rather than portraying the truth. In fact one of the youth workers from Germany described the media as "very violent… It should critically analyse how we want to see our society".

Challenges and needs highlighted by Youth Workers

Challenges

The common challenges that youth workers face when attempting to promote human rights and peace education that were highlighted by most participants are as follows:

• One of the fundamental challenges recorded during these interviews was that young people lack the skills and experience in educating on peace and human rights issues in the communities where they work. The European and Latin American respondents had participated in more training on peace and human rights education than the youth workers from Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, youth workers from all regions expressed a need for more human rights and peace education programs preferably targeting children as young as possible.

• There are no mechanisms to protect youth workers and young people in conflict communities, as many of the youth workers that we interviewed worried about their safety. Worthy to note is the fact that youth workers felt unsafe in conflict communities irrespective of whether the violence is perpetuated by government forces, terrorist groups or armed groups.

• Another major challenge that youth workers in the regions where the study was conducted noted was that it was very challenging to mobilise young people against violence. According to the youth workers, most governments and societies have normalised violence, corruptions and human rights abuses so much that young people think that it is okay to be victimised. Another reason is because young people in some of the communities where the study was conducted felt that the government has neglected them and their needs and they feel powerless and resent the government and decision makers. Consequently, they don't see the need to mobilise against these types of culture and behaviour.
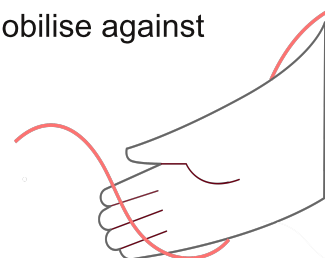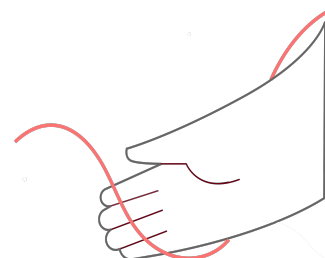
• The intersection between being young and being a woman is another challenge as this is the category of people that most gets ignored by politicians, excluded from policy formulation yet most affected by unfriendly youth policies. Most policy makers and politicians are still old men who have lost touch with the grassroots communities and who have the impression that young people don't know what they are talking about.

• For young people working with interfaith and non-partisan organisations, there is a need to develop skills in dialogue and mediation. Both state and non-state actors usually misunderstand these youth workers.

• Many young people in the communities where we conducted the interviews are not trained as youth workers. This means there are fewer youth workers available to organise and engage with young people in grassroots communities. As such these youth workers have to multitask and take on more roles than they normally should and it becomes overwhelming. The work also takes a toll on their personal lives too.

• Many of the challenges preventing youth workers from engaging young people on peace and human rights education in grassroots communities are structural. There are financial and logistical problems preventing young people from accessing human rights and peace trainings. They may have the interest but lack the money to pay for these trainings or live too far away in rural communities from where these trainings are organised. Young people also have work or school and it might be difficult for them to set aside time for trainings. Even when they succeed to participate in the workshop, there are barriers like language or culture. The problem can be organisational too as groups don't get to generate enough resources or sources for funding to continue work on human rights and peace education so they rely on grants which is not easy to come by. From a purely capitalist perspective which is how most governments and communities process things, human rights and peace work doesn't create financial profit, therefore it is not a lucrative idea to invest in for some people.

Common Needs:

The common needs of youth workers with regards to educating on human rights and peace that were highlighted in the interviews by most participants are as follows:

• Need to create strong civil society where access to quality education and affordable health care is possible.

• Youth organisations and other non-profit organisations should receive more support. Young people are scared to volunteer in non-profits because of the lack of financial support. They would rather concentrate on getting paid jobs to meet the increased financial responsibilities for their housing, bills and food, making voluntary work not an option.

• More technical or vocational education for skills development for young people to become self-employed or get high paying jobs to increase their incomes. With jobs, youth can escape violence, poverty and start seeing their communities and governments from a positive side.

• Institutionalisation of peace education programmes in schools. Young people only get to learn about peace and human rights education when they are already teenagers and have internalised violent cultures, biases and stereotypes.

• Having peace and human rights education programs in schools starting with children as early as possible to increase the chance to transform them from victims of violence to agents of peace.

• The civil society to bridge the gap at the grassroots levels by building the capacity of local communities to develop a grassroots approach to peace building.

• More active and stronger civil society especially in global level so that they can make the governments accountable and remind them of the promises and duties they have for their citizens.

• Create more access to information for young people to know their rights and obligation, understand the power of mobilisation, exploiting the strength in the diversity that exits in their communities and maximising it for the greater good.

Region-specific Needs

We also find it important to highlight the region-specific needs as highlighted by the youth participants below.

Africa
- Safe spaces for meaningful civic participation
- Capacity on peace education and dialogue
- Intergenerational dialogue and learnings
- Zero Budget activities: activities which do not require any funding such as social media campaigns
- Integration of local methodologies that promote peace education and dialogue
- International cooperation and exchange
- Partnership building with local authorities and national governments
- Competence to use ICT tools to promote education and dialogue
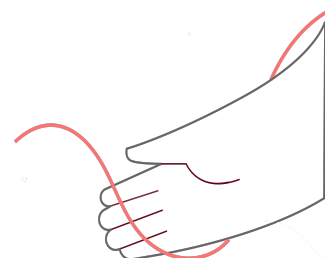
Asia
- Support for resources:
    - Human resources
    - Knowledge
    - Financial resources
- Security and safety net in doing peace work
- Include families of young people in education process so that they understand and support them
- Contextualised policy template for mandatory peace education in schools
- Further empowerment and recognition from the government of youth workers
- Network and alliance building

Europe

• Access to affordable housing and secure employment

• Political education enforcement in formal education

• Safe spaces to meet

• Inclusive sex and relationship education

• Recognition of the profession of youth workers (legal issues, securing freedom and independence of NGOs)

• Cultivating the culture of volunteering (especially regards to volunteer youth workers)

• Public spaces to meet

• Cultivating the enforcement of structured dialogue

• Showcase long-term impact of investment in education

Latin America

• Formal education on peace. Respective states could introduce this topic in their national curricula.

• Institutions that support the voluntary work of young people (In some countries there are just few NGOs , no state institutions such as youth ministries)

• Training opportunities to learn about dynamic methodologies to conduct workshops

• Specific knowledge on peace education and human rights

• Tools or spaces to keep a balance in terms of mental health (support for well being of young activists and youth workers as they face with exclusion and attacks from their societies)

• Tools, mechanisms, and skills to protect young people from social media attacks

• Dialogue skills and there is a need to organise forums to re-articulate youth organisations

• Resources and mechanisms to make organisations sustainable.

Recommendations

In light of this research, we have compiled a list of good practice recommendations made by the young participants and researchers working on issues of peace and human rights across the world, to address issues through peace building and dialogue approaches. They are as follows:

There is need for a systemic change that will overcome capitalism. There is need to create s strong state society where access to quality education and affordable health care is possible. Changing the society is the key. One of the ways to change the system is to carry out a massive sensitisation among young people on why their votes matter. Most draconian regimes that violate the rights of its citizens do so because they are in power. Young people can take back their country by simply performing their civic responsibility.

Youth organisations, and other non-profit organisations should receive more support. Young people are scared to volunteer in non-profits because of the lack of financial support. They would rather concentrate on getting paid jobs to meet the increase financial responsibilities for their housing, bills, food making voluntary work not an option.

It is important to study and analyse the context of conflicts with a thorough conflict analysis and mapping tools. Every conflict is different and understanding the unique context is key. In each context, conflict analysis is a diagnostic tool for understanding the problems in order to address them sustainably.
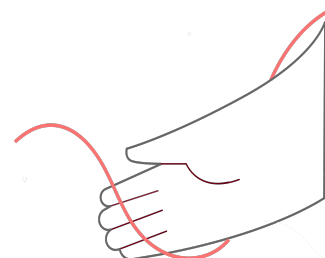
One of the tools of conflict analysis is creating a round table for dialogue so that all the conflict stakeholders sit down and talk about the issues affecting them. This could be young people from the different conflicting groups, security actors, traditional, religious and community leaders, other local and political structures etc. These different stakeholders could provide essential insight into the strategic needs of those involved and help with programming.

Technical or vocational education for skills development for young people was also recommended. This type of education improves the capacity of young people and provides opportunities for income generation. With vocational trainings, young people don't only gain skills but they receive certificates recognising their skills and since capitalist systems value certificates, young people engaged in these types of programs can become self-employed or get high paying jobs to increase their incomes. With jobs, youth can escape violence, poverty and start seeing their communities and governments from a positively.

Institutionalisation of peace education programs in schools. Young people only get to learn about peace and human rights education when they are already teenagers and have internalised violent cultures, biases and stereotypes. Curriculums in schools need to change to include important concepts on human rights, citizens rights and responsibilities, learning about other cultures, stereotypes and mutual respect. The quality of education is critical as it influences the choices that young people make. If peace and human rights education programs can be taught in schools starting with children as early as possible, then there is a greater chance to transform them from victims of violence to agents of peace. The civil society can also bridge the gap at the grassroots levels by building the capacity of local communities to develop a grassroots approach to peace building. Let people understand the peace process and journey with it. Peace is a process and cannot be achieved overnight.

There is need for more active and stronger civil society especially in countries in the global South that can make the governments accountable and remind them of the promises and duties they have for their citizens.

Create more access to information for young people to know their rights and obligation, understand the power of mobilisation, exploiting the strength in the diversity that exits in their communities and maximising it for the greater good.

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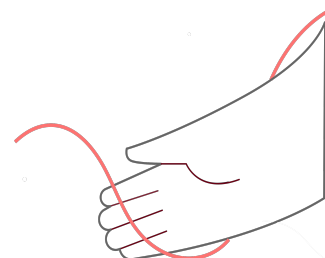
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