

Advocacy Report

Meeting attended:

Placing Youth at the Forefront of Humanitarian Action and the 2030 Agenda
ECOSOC HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT 21-23 June 2017
Palais de Nations, Geneva

Attended by Cecilia Calle-Jorda, Alice Grineau-White, Irina Elisabetha Rusu, GWI Interns

Subject of meeting:

Eighteen percent of world's population is constituted by youth only, furthermore, all persons aged 24 years and younger account for 40% of today's world population. Therefore, involving today's youth in humanitarian action is necessary and they are also essential in the completion of the 2030 agenda. Discussion points focused on general status of youth in conflict zones, barriers they face as well as solutions on how to overcome these barriers or others to come.

Refers to SDG no #: (please reference)

All SDG were tackled with emphasis on SDG no #3,4,5,10,11

Relevant treaties/conventions/resolutions:

No material outcome as the meeting had the objective of communicating the status of youth in conflict zones, presenting successful practices of youth being involved in Humanitarian Aid and stimulate discussions on solutions regarding humanitarian action from attendees.

Session Highlights

Mr. Carsten Staur, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Denmark emphasized the fact that youth already plays a very important role in developing and developed countries and, in order to overcome obstacles that teenagers and children face in situations of conflict, youth should be engaged with the evolution of their communities. He confirmed that 'asking youth the problem is the actual solution' and was very supportive of the Youth Panel Speakers, also trying to encourage the other attendees to embrace projects related to humanitarian aid.

Ms. Muna Abdel Halm, the Youth Representative from UNFPA underscored that we need to put women in leadership positions and teach them how to make decisions and underlined the need of changing mentalities and approaches to helping youth.

Ms. Anushka Kalyanpur, Technical Specialist SRH in Emergencies with CARE and co-chair of the Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Working Group of the IAWG for Reproductive Health in Crises, stressed the idea of adolescent programming or otherwise said helping youth to consider the opportunities in the future.

Mr. Philip Lee Jaatun accentuated the increasing need for funds to support education and to expand the range of opportunities for young people.

Ms. Carol Batchelor, the Director of Division of International Protection, UNHCR instigated a discussion with the attendees with the scope of sharing best practices, but also to get the concerns

and unclarities of youth representatives worldwide. She considers that youth are 'agents of change' and therefore they should be perceived as assets in their communities.

Special Rapporteur Report

General Comments:

- It was agreed that youth should be viewed as leaders and instead of perceiving them as a problem (due to their needs), they should be an asset (eg. innovative ideas). Regarding young women, they embody a large and rich resource, very often untapped and left behind, especially in situations of conflict.
- Concerning the obstacles, it was mentioned that youth are generally left on the sideline as a consequence of their lack of experience. Moreover, in situations of conflict they regularly play the role of household providers (child labor) or forced into marriage. It was considered that education is the best response for ending child marriage.
- Besides, when in conflict, youth are separated from their social networks, which makes them vulnerable and they are expected to be silent and obedient, having no say in the decision-making process for sustainable communities, females particularly.
- Alongside with no managerial power, youth are also not involved in designing and monitoring investment and programs built for them. These programs usually assume what young people need rather than asking them, therefore they have no platform to express their shortages.
- The need of funds continues to be elevated as investing in education is considered an investment in the future.

In regard to solutions, the following were mentioned:

- Adolescent programming: help youth to consider the opportunities in the future.
- Draw attention to the need of women in leadership positions and the importance of teaching them how to handle important roles in their communities. Help them build confidence.
- Understand the urgency of action.
- Diversify the youth friendly services- more research and more sensitive programs and make them accessible and approachable.
- Work towards legal employment for youth.

Educational Take Away for GWI:

- Recognize the role of girls in the society and help them build the necessary confidence in furtherance of them to advocate for their peers and affect policy in terms of education in conflicted countries. Leadership is very effective, and it should be an important skill to teach them.
- Advocate for integration of youth, especially girls, in the decision-making boards for community development.
- Aid girls in understanding future opportunities and their role in the society, otherwise said, advocate for gender equality.
- Identify barriers that young girls face in receiving education, particularly in conflict.