

**POSITION PAPER**

# **INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE**

**20  
22**

**Organised by:**



**Supporting Organiser**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Intergenerational Dialogue 2022 was conducted in a hybrid manner on the 2nd of June and included over 120 participants, virtually and in person. The dialogue aims at building a safe space for young people to converse with their policymakers and for the collective group to draft recommendations for action within one's community. Meaningful Youth Engagement is at the core of the dialogue's objectives.

This position paper includes results from a survey conducted among applicants for the dialogue and shares key topics discussed during the one-day event. A detailed recommendation list is also included to review and reflect on during future events in which the position paper may be referred.

# BACKGROUND

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The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic and social pressures have disproportionately impacted young people in a multitude of ways. While young people were already facing disproportionate levels of unemployment and under-employment before the pandemic, COVID-19 has further compounded these situations. Shift to online modes of communication, education, and work has intensified the digital divide and deepened disadvantages for those with limited to no Internet access, exacerbating unemployment issues and lack of access to quality education and essential services and information.

Addressing such challenges and needs of young people requires comprehensive, youth-oriented, multi-sectoral approaches. Meaningful youth engagement should be ensured in any context, including in the pandemic and humanitarian response efforts. Nonetheless, the realization of meaningful engagement is limited across the region. Barriers to youth engagement include systems and organizational structures that do not allow youth engagement; cultural norms that discourage young people from engaging openly in discussion and decision-making in spaces; low level of education and lack of youth-friendly information; and limited safe spaces or opportunities for youth engagement. Furthermore, marginalized or minority youth are often systematically excluded from participation and engagement.

The Global Consensus Statement on meaningful adolescent and youth engagement defines the principles as below:

**Meaningful adolescent and youth engagement is an inclusive, intentional, mutually-respectful partnership between adolescents, youth, and adults whereby power is shared, respective contributions are valued, and young people's ideas, perspectives, skills, and strengths are integrated into the design and delivery of programs, strategies, policies, funding mechanisms, and organizations that affect their lives and their communities, countries, and world.**

To this end, young people should be given capacity-building opportunities to exercise their leadership, implement activities, advocate for their rights, keep decision-makers accountable and establish relevant mechanisms. At the same time, efforts should be made to sensitize governments, parliaments, and other stakeholders about meaningful youth engagement.

# BACKGROUND

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Acknowledging that parliamentarians are best placed to advocate for the creation of participatory structures, the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), Y-PEER Asia-Pacific Center, and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Asia Pacific Regional Office (APRO) facilitated a virtual Intergenerational Dialogue of Young People and Parliamentarians on Meaningful Youth Engagement in 2021, where the participants shared a common understanding of meaningful youth engagement, identified good practices and gaps in youth engagement, and discuss ideas to address these gaps. Also, the Intergenerational Dialogue, attended by more than 100 participants from 23 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, helped connect parliamentarians, youth advocates, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representatives.

In 2022, APDA and Y-PEER AP, with support from UNFPA APRO and Robert Carr Fund yet again convened parliamentarians, young people, and other development partners with an aim to contribute to:

- Following up on the 2021 Intergenerational Dialogue Recommendations to document the progress since the July 2021 meetings and make a follow-up plan;
- A better understanding of what meaningful youth engagement entails both among young people and parliamentarians;
- Mapping of existing youth engagement mechanisms, youth policies, and potential entry points/resource persons at the national level;
- Increase in the number of youth engagement mechanisms at the national level;
- Implementation of annual regional intergenerational dialogue of young people and parliamentarians and preparatory youth consultations; and
- Implementation of national-level dialogues.

The 2022 intergenerational dialogue was conducted in a hybrid style, with a mix of in-person and online participation. To maximize the effectiveness and impact, the participation of parliamentarians and youth advocates from the same countries was emphasized so that they can continue to engage with each other for concrete actions.

The hybrid dialogue included discussions on the roles of parliamentarians in addressing youth policies and legislation, youth engagement during the COVID pandemic, systems for engaging young people in the future, and Young people and the law.

# WORKING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SYSTEMS

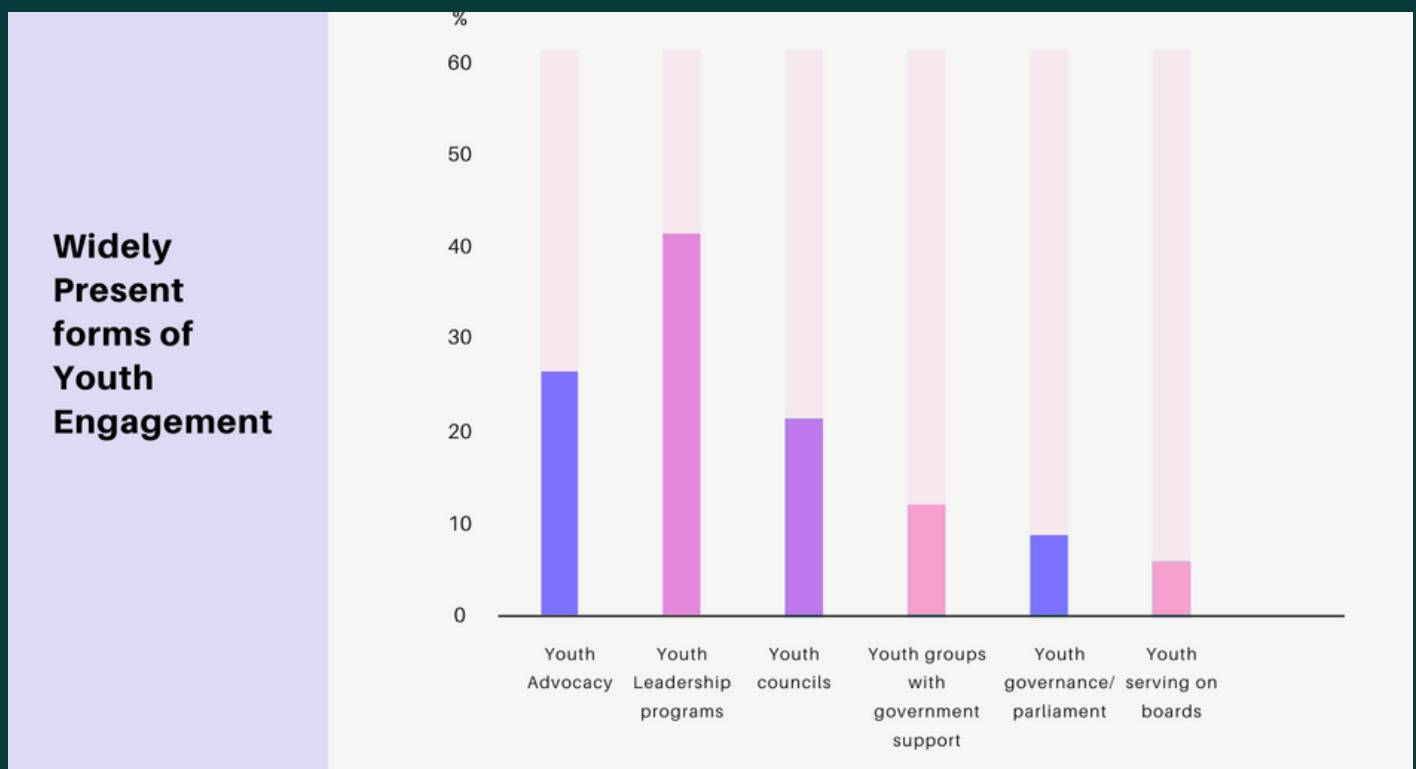


Figure 1

The survey and the discussions during the dialogue showed that while there are many different forms of youth engagement systems put in place by different governments and countries, there are a few that stand out.

- Bills strengthening youth capacity building
- Allowances for local youth officials
- National Youth Policies
- Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organisations that engage young people
- Financial support for entrepreneurship and employment of youth
- Voluntarism opportunities
- Brand value for youth-led enterprises
- Public consultations and dialogues
- Advocacy programs for young people
- Youth Leadership programs
- Youth councils, youth parliament

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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Since the last Intergenerational dialogue, the countries involved have noticed progress made by their governments. Youth-led entrepreneurship was supported in rural parts of Bhutan to address rural youth unemployment. Youth programs on various issues, including international and border issues, and the use of community mapping was introduced. Certain bills have been passed in countries like the Philippines that strengthen youth-related institutions, thereby allowing more platforms for young people to amplify participation in decision-making and governance. More Youth Organisations are mainstreaming parliamentary procedures and practices, diplomacy, and civic engagement. Many young people are also seen volunteering with youth-led organizations, becoming more active, and collaborating with local government units.

However, there are yet more problems that exist. The age restriction for political engagement may not work in favor of the youth. Many countries lack gender inclusivity along with the inclusion of disability-friendly services. There is misinformation regarding the minority groups and an unfavorable environment for people with disabilities. Trans rights are neglected in countries like Pakistan, where trans people are not allocated vaccination centers during COVID-19. While CSOs and youth organizations are increasing meaningful youth engagement, there is a delay in government recognition of these organizations. Limits to their workings affect their ability to implement their targets fully. Out-of-school youth, LGBTQIA+, Indigenous People, Students, and Farmers/Fisherfolks, among others, are still marginalized. The lack of priority for these marginalized sectors remains a major gap.

Responders to the survey pointed out key areas for work to be done in. Four priority recommendation areas to be discussed during the dialogue were identified through youth responses as follows:

- Youth's involvement in decision-making
- Services for Young People and Young Key Population
- Allocation of Resources
- Youth policies

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Survey results also identified the most effective forms of engagement present and sought out by young people in their communities.

## SURVEY SAYS..

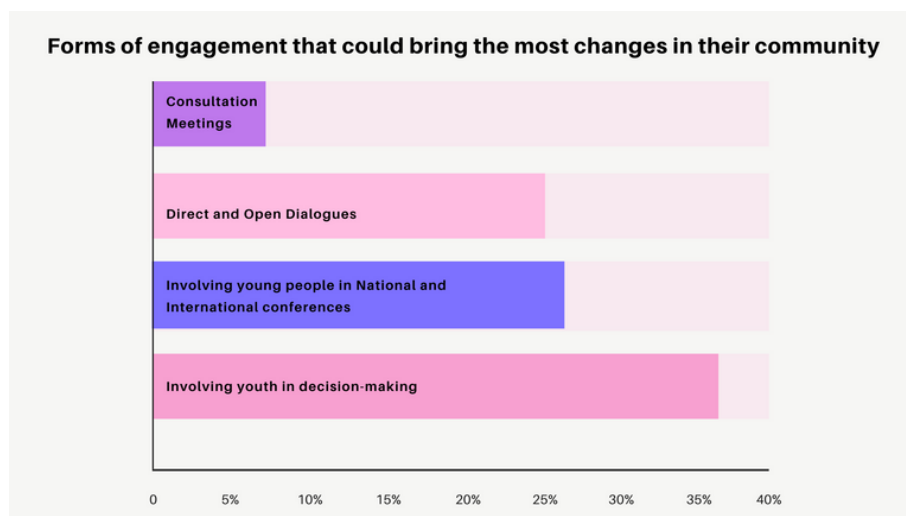


Figure 2

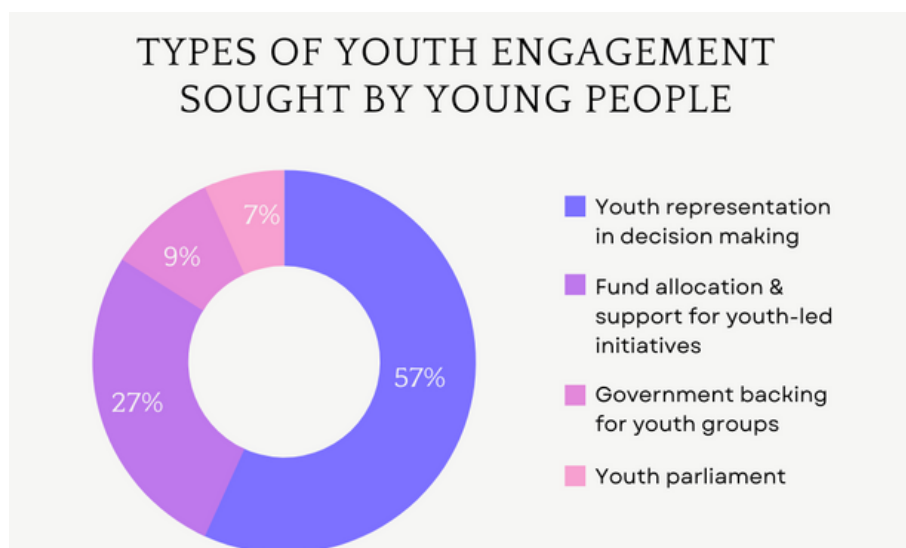


Figure 3



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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## I. Youth's Involvement in Decision making

- Having youth parliaments at various levels, such as district and provincial level
- Involvement of International and Non-Governmental Organizations to bridge the gap between youth and governments
- Assign a coordinating body from the government for meaningful youth engagement
- Institution of a youth task force to hold government accountable
- Engage rural young people. Give equal importance to that of educated and urban young people

## II. Services for Young People

- Comprehensive sexuality education in the school curriculum (as is being implemented in some participating countries already.)
- Create a conducive environment to deliver SRH at schools/out of schools (impact analysis of teachers' training/follow-up)
- Build awareness and education programs for the general youth population around topics of SDGs, Climate Change, and Gender.
- Empower a young generation that believes in engaging meaningfully in society along with fulfilling personal responsibilities.
- Offer Youth Development as a course in selected academic institutions, strengthening initiatives for the youth in respective communities, such as is being done in the Phillipines.
- Gender Transformative Education and Approaches along with Gender Inclusivity even in public spaces
- Mental Health counselors in schools and better MH facilities.
- More accessible facilities for people with disabilities.
- Proper internet for rural communities



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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## III. Allocation of Resources

- Develop research or data on youth crisis to get government and public on board.
- Develop research on LGBTQ+ and their problems in order to be recognized by the government
- Generate studies or data-driven initiatives centered on youth participation and relevant policies.
- Establish a single, centralized database for youth organizations, NGOs, and CSOs as a directory to widen networking and partnerships in the rollout of youth policies and engagements.
- provide accessible grants and funding to youth grassroots movements, especially those in rural or least advantaged areas and young indigenous communities
- Recognize contributions of youth by providing grants, funds & Scholarships opportunities
- Government to add a financial mechanism for mental health
- Creative engagement as in music, arts, and so on.
- More Inclusive spaces
- Provide more resources for youth capacity development and training opportunities.

## IV. Youth Policies

- Acknowledge very young adolescents(VYAs) as young people and equals among other stakeholders. Specific provisions must be made for VYAs in terms of enabling policy frameworks, needs driven reforms and inclusiveness. National youth policy to include specific strategies for mechanisms for VYAs.
- Develop and facilitate interactive participatory forums where younger and older generations can share knowledge, ideas, and a common experience.
- Acknowledge the opportunity gap between rural and urban youth, youth from differing religious backgrounds, and youth with differing abilities.



# REFERENCES

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APFSD 2021 Call to Action

COVID-19: Working with and for young people

Global Consensus Statement on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1c/k1cfrjs4j6>

UNFPA. My World. Youth Leadership and Participation Module. (Unpublished)

UN Youth Strategy 2030

**The recordings of the Intergenerational Dialogue 2022 are available on YouTube**

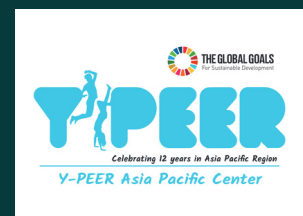
## Contact for details and future opportunities

**Y-PEER Asia Pacific Center**

[www.ypeerap.org](http://www.ypeerap.org)

This position paper is prepared by Ayeshwini Lama and supported by Awnu Shrestha, Lakey Tshering and Sangeet Kayastha (Y-PEER Asia Pacific Center) with the help of resources, participants, and survey findings from the Intergenerational Dialogue 2022.

## Organisers



## Supporting Organiser

