



“ WE BELIEVE in youth ”

Global Refugee Youth Consultations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Seldom consulted, frequently overlooked, and often unable to fully participate in decision making, the talents, energy, and potential of Refugee Youth—young people aged 15-24 years old—remain largely untapped. This must change. Refugee Youth want the same things young people everywhere want: to be consulted, to be listened to, to contribute, to engage, and to be part of solutions. They want opportunities, education, employment, and inclusion.



“We’re just *calling* on the partners, governmental representatives, everybody out there: ‘Give us more space’... Youth are powerful and capable of running their own projects.”



UNHCR and the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC)

undertook the Global Refugee Youth Consultations (GRYC) to amplify youth “voices” in decisions that affect them. The GRYC included 1,267 young people who participated in 56 national or sub-national consultations held in 22 countries between October 2015 and June 2016. The GRYC were the beginning of a process—a process that must continue to develop the leadership, capacity, and futures of Refugee Youth everywhere. This Executive Summary highlights the outcomes of the GRYC process—Seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth (Core Actions), and ten challenges for Refugee Youth—and summarises recommendations for the full range of actors engaged in humanitarian response—including States, multi-lateral organisations, international and national civil society organisations, traditional and non-traditional donors, and community and youth groups (humanitarian actors)—to take the Core Actions forward. The full report—“We Believe in Youth”—provides more detail on these outcomes and recommendations.

GRYC Participants: QUICK FACTS

Participants included young refugees who had left their countries between **one** month and **20** years ago, as well as those who have been born as refugees



65 host-country youth

23 participants who noted that they have a disability



123 married youth and **99** youth with children

About **20%** of youth reported working part- or full-time

About **40%** of participants had completed **primary** school;

- 37%** had completed or were enrolled in **secondary** school;
- 10%** had completed or were enrolled in **undergraduate level** tertiary education;
- 2%** had completed or were enrolled in **post-graduate** education;
- 1%** reported that they are **illiterate** or have had **no schooling**; and
- 10%** had participated in other **formal training**

TEN CHALLENGES for Refugee Youth:

Through the consultations, young refugees analysed causes and impacts of the difficulties they face. Although the context of each country is specific, and the dynamics of displacement are regionally distinct, the challenges that Refugee Youth identified are remarkably consistent. During the consultations, participants examined how these challenges are interconnected.



TEN CHALLENGES for Refugee Youth



Youth stressed the challenges, complexities, and delays in the processes to obtain asylum and related legal documents from UNHCR and/or local authorities, and the serious implications of not having them.

Difficulty in accessing quality learning, education, and skills-building opportunities:



Young refugees consistently identified the difficulty of obtaining recognition for their existing qualifications and accessing quality learning, formal education, and skills-building opportunities as a serious challenge.

Discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and “culture clash”:



Young refugees noted discrimination, racism, and xenophobia across all regions and emphasised how it can leave them feeling isolated and marginalised.

Few youth employment and livelihood opportunities:



Refugee Youth emphasised they would rather work than depend on humanitarian aid and expressed frustration at the limited employment and livelihood opportunities available to them.

Gender inequality, discrimination, exploitation, and violence, including for LGBTI youth:



Young refugees highlighted concerns about gender inequality and discrimination as challenges in and of themselves, but also as underlying causes of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence (SGBV), including domestic violence, child and forced marriage, sexual assault, and rape.



Poor access to youth-sensitive healthcare, including psychosocial support:

Refugee Youth highlighted lack of access to quality health care as a major concern and particularly noted the need for youth-sensitive sexual and reproductive healthcare and psychosocial support.



Lack of safety, security, and freedom of movement:

Refugee Youth expressed concerns about safety, security, and freedom of movement linked to xenophobia and difficulty with documents. In some locations, they also highlighted police harassment as well as arrest and detention.



Challenges for unaccompanied youth:

Refugees stressed the specific protection and practical challenges for unaccompanied youth, including the difficult transition and lack of preparation for those who turn 18, “age out”, and are no longer afforded additional protection and support, but often still need guidance and assistance as well as access to rights and protection.



Lack of opportunities to participate, be engaged, or access decision makers:

Youth identified a lack of empowerment and engagement opportunities as factors that limit youth involvement in decision making. They have few opportunities to analyse issues, devise solutions, share their ideas with decision makers, and be heard.



Lack of information about asylum, refugee rights, and available services:

In all the consultations, young refugees highlighted challenges related to the lack of relevant, honest, and transparent information about the asylum process, refugee rights, available services, and the society and culture of their country of asylum.

SEVEN CORE ACTIONS

for Refugee Youth:

Throughout the GRYC process, participants brainstormed solutions to the challenges they face, identified how young refugees could take actions themselves, and made recommendations regarding the types of support they need. Despite living in different contexts, the participants consistently suggested a similar package of interconnected actions that could address multiple challenges. The hundreds of actions and recommendations that participants developed during the consultations were consolidated thematically by youth to formulate “Seven Core Actions for Refugee Youth” (Core Actions). The Core Actions are intended as a framework to help humanitarian actors in working with, and for Refugee Youth, and to shape youth-specific policy, guidance, and programmes.

Core Action 1: Empower Refugee Youth through meaningful engagement:

Humanitarian actors must work to empower young refugees by facilitating opportunities for youth to voice their ideas, engage in decision-making processes, and develop their leadership potential.

Core Action 2: Recognise, utilise, and develop Refugee Youth capacities and skills:

Humanitarian actors must recognise and build upon young refugees’ existing knowledge, skills, capacities, and qualifications; support access to quality and inclusive learning opportunities including formal and non-formal education, skills building, and jobs training; and facilitate employment, and livelihoods opportunities.

Core Action 3: Ensure Refugee Youth-focused protection:

Humanitarian actors must engage young refugees in protecting themselves and their peers, and make sure that young refugees have access to personal documentation, freedom of movement, and protective services that are attuned to their needs and ensure their safety.

Core Action 4 : Support Refugee Youth physical and emotional wellbeing:

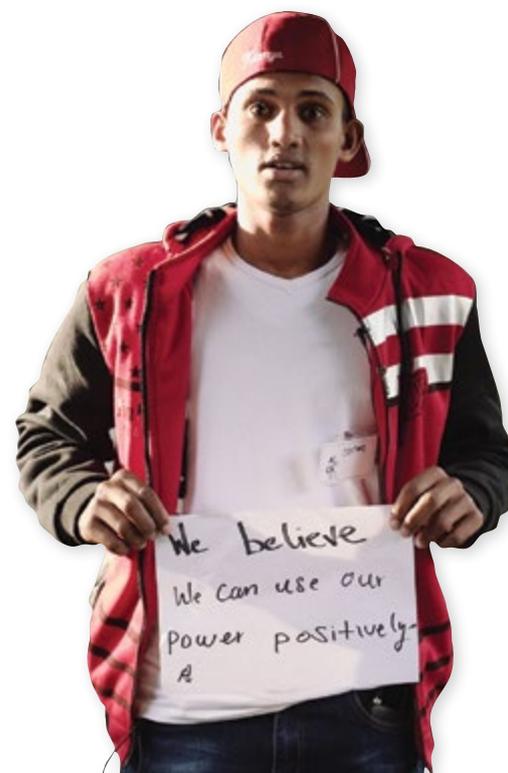
Humanitarian actors must support young refugees to access and be involved in services and activities that support their mental, emotional, and physical health and happiness, and their ability to engage and develop socially, physically, spiritually, and emotionally with their peers, family, and community.



“If every one of us youth takes actions with our own hands, then all the society will *change*.”



“Through youth empowerment and engagement, we are able to deliver results to benefit ourselves and other youth refugees globally... We can *engage* by mobilising action.”





“To play football or basketball with everyone is nice...to be part of a *team* is better, you don't feel alone.”



“Youth are *connectors!*
Youth take care of children, youth translate for older people and [youth] have links with the host community.”



Core Action 5: *Facilitate* Refugee Youth networking and information sharing:

Humanitarian actors must facilitate two-way sharing of accurate, honest, age-appropriate, and context-specific information with young refugees through channels and structures that are easily accessible.



Core Action 6: *Reinforce* Refugee Youth as connectors and peace builders:

Humanitarian actors must channel and reinforce young refugees' abilities to build connections and relationships across social, cultural, linguistic, political, and other differences, and support them to contribute meaningfully to peace-building processes.



Core Action 7: *Generate* data and evidence on Refugee Youth to promote accountability to youth:

Humanitarian actors must gather quality disaggregated data on youth across different sectors; this is essential for planning and designing youth programming and for being accountable to youth.

Summary of recommendations for **HUMANITARIAN ACTORS:**

The type of engagement demonstrated by the GRYC must become institutionalised through the development of frameworks and guidance on consultation and collaboration with youth. But in order for that engagement and consultation to be meaningful, it is essential to take the concerns, ideas, solutions, and recommendations of youth seriously enough to use them. During the national consultations, youth identified stakeholders relevant within their context. These included UNHCR and other UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), host government authorities, and donors as well as private sector organisations, foundations, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), and sports and cultural foundations. Section 4 (see full report which can be downloaded from: <http://www.unhcr.org/57e1126e7.html>) provides more detailed recommendations and suggests how humanitarian and other actors—including UNHCR and sister UN agencies, governments, donors, non-governmental organisations, and youth themselves—can take steps to implement the Core Actions. Essential aspects of those recommendations include the following, which are relevant for all actors:

- Facilitate opportunities for refugee and host-country youth to share experiences and work together, such as through national youth organisations, national youth strategies, and national sports and cultural initiatives.
- Proactively and responsively work with youth to identify ways for youth to be involved in humanitarian protection and assistance programmes, including through youth-led initiatives.
- Ensure, through policy and guidance, that governments and humanitarian actors, including UNHCR and other UN agencies, NGOs, and youth themselves engage the hardest-to-reach young people, including unaccompanied children and youth, adolescent girls and young women, married girls, youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersexual (LGBTI), sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors, and young people with disabilities, and specifically consider them in programmatic responses.
- Expand access to legal employment for Refugee Youth and to income generating activities that foster self-reliance for young refugees and their families.
- Expand initiatives to make education and other learning opportunities accessible to Refugee Youth including financial assistance to support access to tertiary education and recognition of refugees’ educational certifications from their country of origin and other countries they have lived in.
- Facilitate the acquisition of personal identification documents including machine readable Convention Travel Documents and ensure that all security services are well-trained in refugee rights and appropriate, youth-friendly procedures.
- Support the collection of data on young refugees, disaggregated by age and sex, and facilitate the development of evidenced-based programming for youth.
- Establish a Refugee Youth advisory council to advise UNHCR on youth issues and represent young refugees globally and link with other global youth forums and networks to ensure that Refugee Youth are included on global agendas and that Refugee Youth voices are heard.
- Support implementation of the Core Actions by creating funding streams and calls for proposals focused on implementation of the Core Actions, including dedicated funding for youth-led initiatives.
- Fund or support collaborative efforts to develop operational guidance and policies for UNHCR and other UN agencies, NGOs, youth-led organisations and other humanitarian actors to further elaborate the Core Actions in refugee settings.

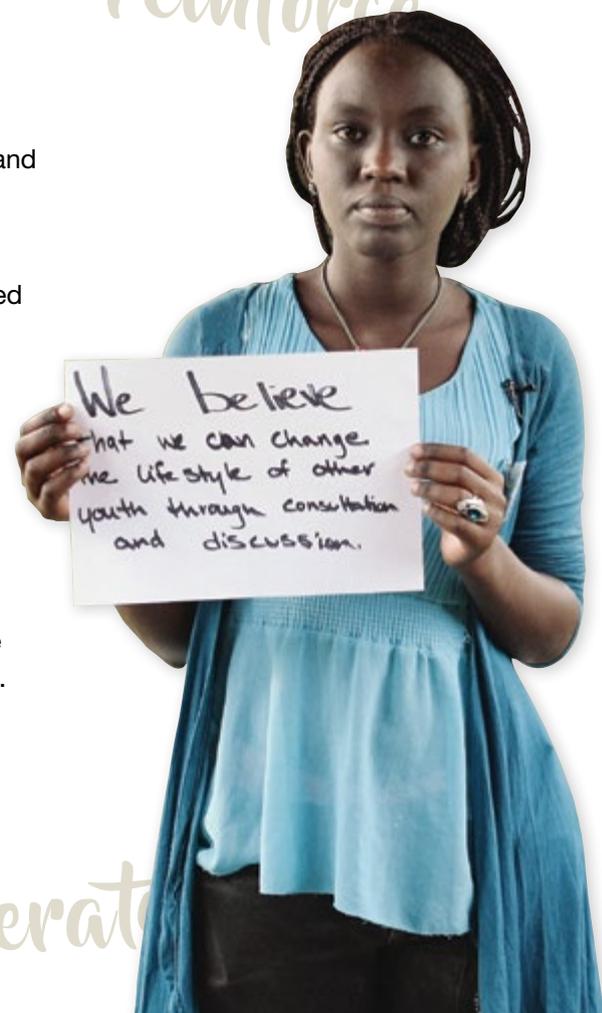
facilitate

ensure

empower

support

reinforce



generate



PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP

A. Malta

- ★ Organisation for Friendship in Diversity (OFD) / Integra / UNHCR Malta country office

NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

1. Uganda

- ✳ World Vision International / Kenya / Uganda
- ❖ COBURWAS International Youth Organisation to Transform Africa (CIYOTA)
- ▲ UNHCR Uganda country office

2. Jordan

- ✳ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) / Save the Children
- ❖ Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre (PBRYC)
- ▲ UNHCR Jordan country office

3. Morocco

- ✳ N/A
- ❖ Fondation Orient-Occident (FOO)
- ▲ UNHCR Morocco country office

4. Ecuador

- ✳ RET International
- ❖ Corporación Humor y Vida (HyV)
- ▲ UNHCR Ecuador country office

5. Chad

- ✳ World Vision West Africa
- ❖ World Vision Chad
- ▲ UNHCR Chad country office

6. Zambia

- ✳ World Vision International
- ❖ Action Africa Help Zambia (AAHZ) / World Vision Zambia
- ▲ UNHCR Zambia country office

7. Pakistan

- ✳ Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
- ❖ Children and Women Trust (CWT) / Rural Empowerment and Institutional Development (REPID)
- ▲ UNHCR Pakistan Peshawar and country office

8. Turkey

- ✳ Plan International / Save the Children
- ❖ Refugee Support Center (RSC -MUDEM) / ASAM (implementing partner)
- ▲ UNHCR Turkey country office

9. Kenya

- ✳ NRC / DRC / Film Aid / Xavier Project
- ❖ World Vision Kenya
- ▲ UNHCR Kenya country office

TOOLKIT CONSULTATIONS

10. Australia

- ✳ Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN Australia) / Refugee Council of Australia

11. Bangladesh

- ✳ UNHCR Sub Office Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh / Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI)

12. Cyprus

- ✳ UNCRC Policy Center "Hope For Children"

13. Dadaab Kenya

- ✳ RET International / UNHCR Sub Office Dadaab, Kenya

14. Alsace France

- ✳ Terre des Hommes International Federation represented by Terre des Hommes France along with the participation of Terre des Hommes Association Locale 68

15. Normandy France

- ✳ Terre des Hommes France (representative office in Normandy), France-Terre d'Asile Caen / secondary school in Hérouville Saint-Clair

16. Paris France

- ✳ Terre des Hommes France

17. Germany

- ✳ Plan International Germany

18. Greece

- ✳ ARSIS Association for the Social Support of Youth

19. Malta

- ✳ Organisation for Friendship in Diversity (OFD), Integra Foundation, UNHCR Malta country office, Spark 15, Kopin

20. New Zealand

- ✳ New Zealand Red Cross and the New Zealand Refugee Youth Council (NZRYC)

21. Sweden

- ✳ One Third Sweden

22. Switzerland

- ✳ Terre des hommes schweiz / Swiss Foundation of the International Social Service

23. Thailand

- ✳ APRRN, Asylum Access, Amnesty International, JRS

24. USA

- ✳ Vulnerable Minors Working Group (VMWG) of Refugee Council USA (RCUSA)

25. Algeria

- ✳ UNHCR Algeria, Tindouf and country office