



**INTERGENERATIONAL
DIALOGUE AND
PREPARATORY YOUTH
CONSULTATION**

REPORT

ORGANISED BY:



SUPPORTING ORGANISERS:



BACKGROUND



There are almost one billion young people aged 10-24 years living in low- and middle-income countries in Asia and the Pacific, accounting for 60% of the world's adolescents and young adults. There has been a large amount of progress in improving livelihoods for young people; however, significant inequalities and inequities still exist particularly in education, employment, access to services and more broadly participation. Despite having one of the world's highest youth labour force participation rates, it is characterized by poor working conditions and informality, which leads to rising cases of mental health issues. Moreover, life-threatening risks are experienced by young people in conflict or emergency settings, or those who flee home in search of survival or for better life opportunities.

While there has been progress in defining standards of adolescent-responsive health services, considerable barriers remain and adolescents are often the missing population in universal health coverage. Only 20% of adolescents are covered by any health insurance. Consequently, young people have high unmet needs for health services including sexual and reproductive health services. These challenges and inequalities have only been exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19. Shift to online modes of communication, work and education deepened disadvantages for those with limited to no access to the Internet, exacerbating issues of unemployment and lack of access to quality education, and essential services and information, while also exposing young people to cyberbullying and online sexual harassment and exploitation.

Such impacts of COVID-19 are most harshly experienced by young people already living in difficult situations. Young migrants, young people living in poor urban areas, young people without a home, young people living with disabilities, girls and young women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) young people and those living with HIV face higher risks of exploitation, violence and mental health issues, and already poor access to health services and protection. Addressing such diverse challenges and needs of young people requires a comprehensive, youth-centered, multisectoral approach. It is only by partnering with and meaningfully engaging young people, we can achieve peace, security, justice, climate resilience and the 2030 Agenda.

Young people are already contributing greatly to the resilience of their communities, introducing innovative approaches, inspiring social progress, and driving political changes.

Meaningful youth engagement should be ensured in any contexts including in the COVID-19 response. Young people should be treated as partners in all phases of the COVID-19 response. They should be systematically included through consultations and knowledge-sharing, involved in decision-making at all levels, including budget allocations, and engaged in the implementation of response measures.

Nonetheless, realization of meaningful engagement is limited across the region. Meaningful engagement requires conscious efforts as well as sufficient allocation of time and resources. Capacity building opportunities should be given to young people to enable them 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 and other stakeholders about meaningful youth engagement.

BACKGROUND



Intergenerational Dialogue on Meaningful Youth Engagement



Parliamentarians are best placed to advocate for creation of participatory structures and capacity building opportunities for both young people and government institutions, which are vital in the realization of meaningful youth engagement. Since the Asia and Pacific region is the most diverse, with countries that are experiencing the highest levels of inequality, parliamentarians have an increasingly important role to play in addressing the needs and challenges faced by their people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized members of society.

APDA with support of UNFPA APRO has been working with parliamentarians and national committees on population and development (NCs) in this region to strengthen political commitments and actions for the advancement of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Nairobi Summit commitments. Due to the ever-changing pool of parliamentarians, APDA together with APRO must routinely provide parliamentarians with information and knowledge, skills, networking and learning opportunities that support their continuous professional development needs. This work includes building skills and applying tools/methodologies to more effectively advocate and support for increased development assistance and national budgets for population/SRHR issues, as well as enforcement of laws and policies to respect and protect SRHR. There is also a need to understand how best to improve youth engagement, especially in the context of the ICPD agenda and Nairobi Commitments.

The aim of this intergenerational dialogue was to share a common understanding of meaningful youth engagement and good examples of youth engagement in order to inform action plans in respective countries. At the same time, this dialogue was intended to connect parliamentarians, youth advocates, and CSO representatives in respective countries, in order to facilitate follow-up discussions on action plans.



OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the International Dialogue and Youth Consultation were:

- To have a shared understanding towards meaningful youth engagement
- To share good examples /different modalities of meaningful youth engagement either in general or COVID-19 contexts, both online and offline engagement
- To identify gaps in youth engagement and discuss ideas to address these gaps
- To form and promote partnership between parliamentarians, Civil Society Organisations, and youth partners in respective countries and explore modalities for meaningful youth participation and engagement.



*A total of
110
youth participants from
over
17
countries attended the
preparatory youth
consultation.*

*Most of the participants were
between the age of 18 and 25, with
10.8% below 18.
55% of the participants were female,
41% male, and the rest were
transgender or preferred not to
answer*

5th July, 2021

PREPARATORY YOUTH CONSULTATION

The Preparatory Youth Consultation for the International Dialogue of the Asian Parliamentarians and Youth Advocates on Youth and Meaningful Youth Engagement was divided into four sessions- 1) Meaningful youth engagement and its modalities 2) Meaningful youth engagement in practice 3) Gaps in meaningful youth engagement and how to address them 4) How to effectively communicate with policymakers.

Opening remarks from Dr. Osamau Kusumoto, Executive Director of APDA emphasized the importance of decisions made for the youth by the youth and included statements about the roles of young people in continuing such discussions.

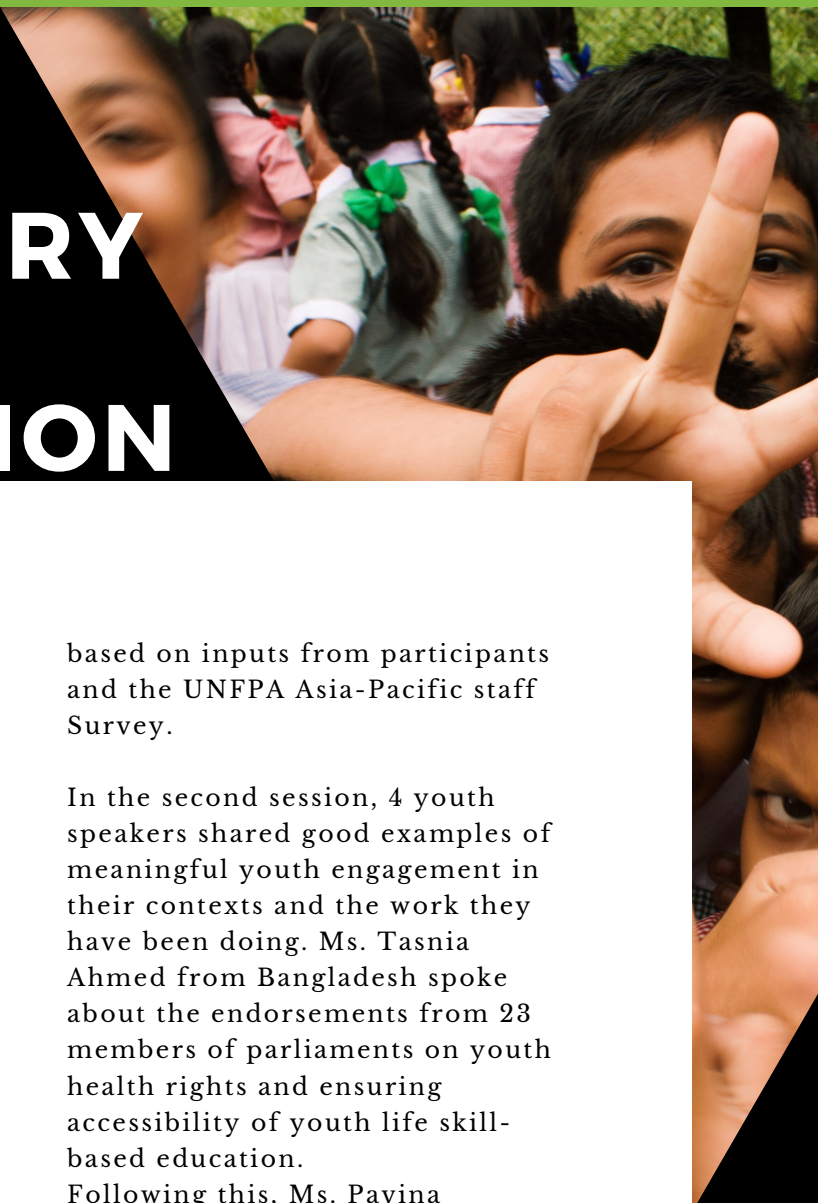
The first session on Meaningful Youth Engagement and its modalities in the Asia-Pacific Region was an introduction to the concept of meaningful youth engagement and unpacking its different principles. Participants shared reflections in the chat. Mr. Sangeet Kayastha from Y-PEER Asia Pacific Centre also gave an overview of different mechanisms of youth engagement

based on inputs from participants and the UNFPA Asia-Pacific staff Survey.

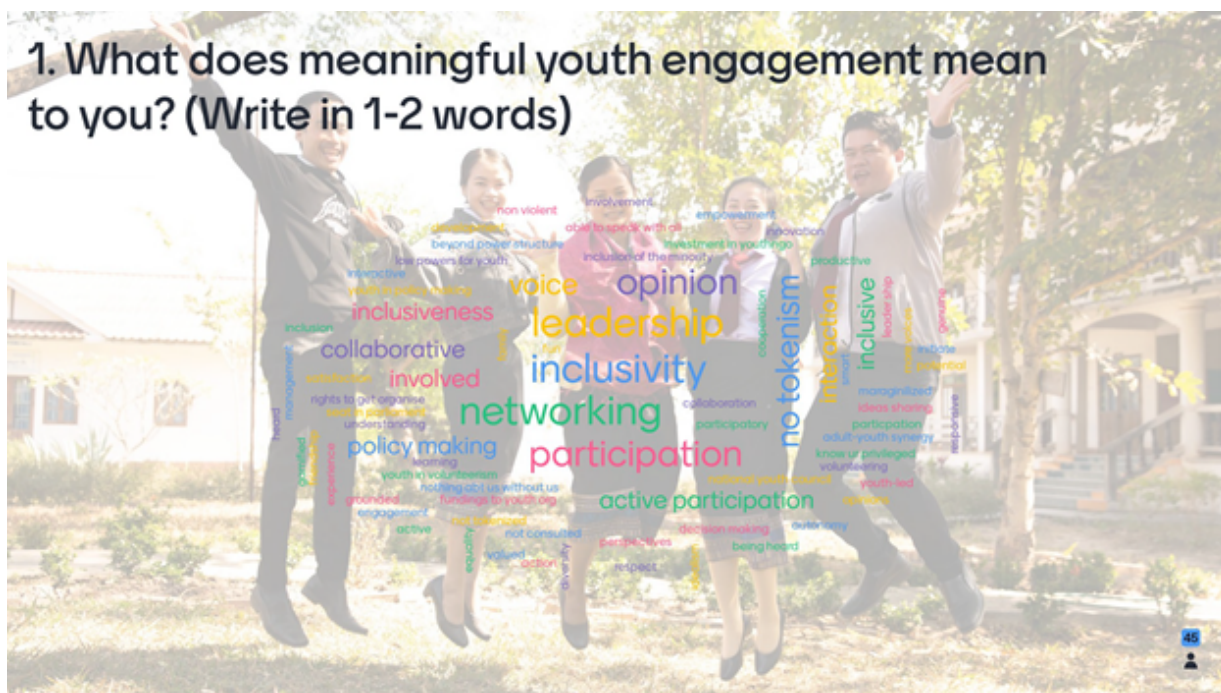
In the second session, 4 youth speakers shared good examples of meaningful youth engagement in their contexts and the work they have been doing. Ms. Tasnia Ahmed from Bangladesh spoke about the endorsements from 23 members of parliaments on youth health rights and ensuring accessibility of youth life skill-based education.

Following this, Ms. Pavina Ouansysomphou from Lao PDR shared about the development of Lao PDR's first-ever national Youth Advisory Committee. The third youth speaker Mr. Janith Perera from Sri Lanka talked about the youth peace panel in his country.

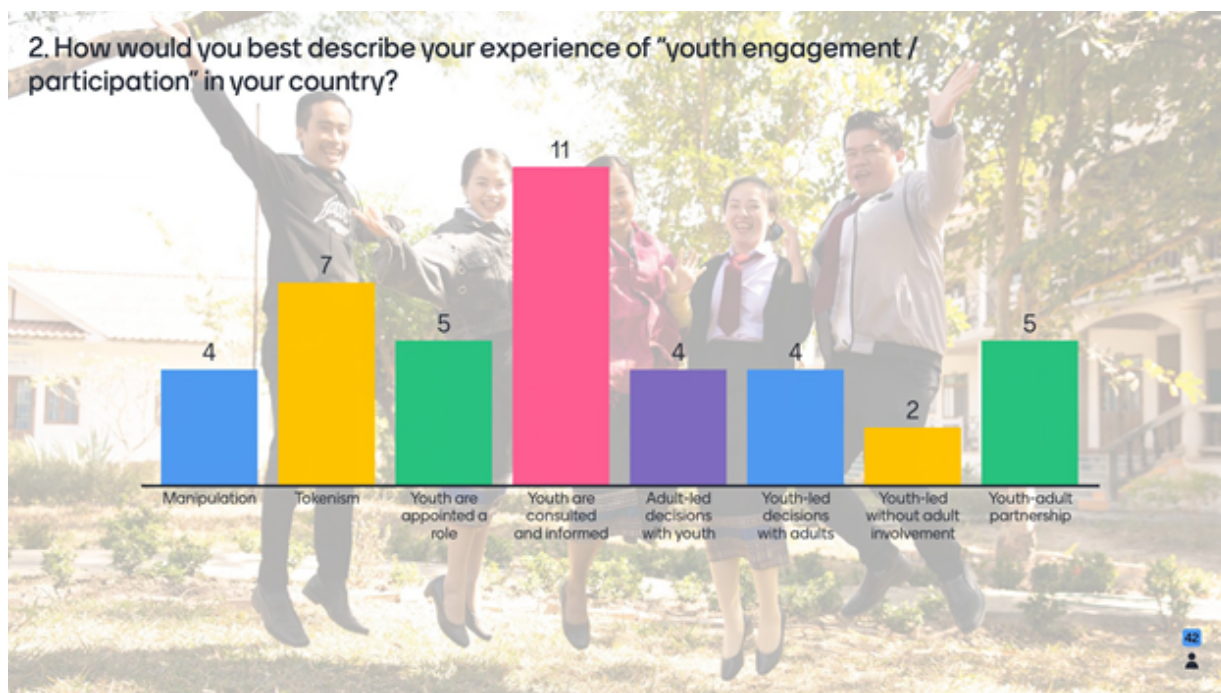
The examples shared by these youth speakers set a positive tone for the consultation and inspired the participants to become agents of positive change in their communities.



1. What does meaningful youth engagement mean to you? (Write in 1-2 words)

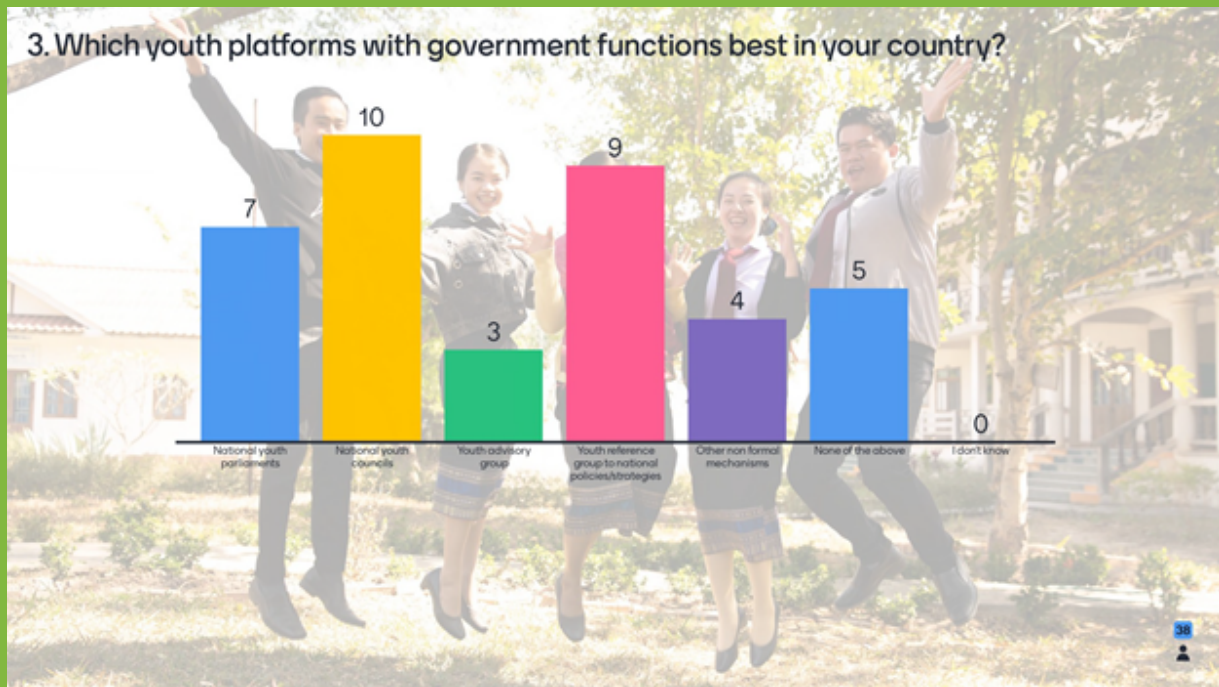


2. How would you best describe your experience of "youth engagement / participation" in your country?



MENTI- METER QUIZ

Participants were asked to answer quiz questions on Mentimeter in session 1. These questions were regarding what meaningful youth engagement means to them and what their experience of it is in their country. These are the responses that were received.



The 4th Mentimeter question "What are the lessons learned from these examples? What are keys to success?" received responses such as:

- Diversity and inclusion
- Youth Participation
- Need to work on intersectional issues
- Youth Leadership

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5th July, 2021

PREPARATORY YOUTH CONSULTATION

The motivating examples and speeches made by the youth speakers led to the third session where the participants were put into breakout rooms to discuss gaps and ideas to address these gaps. There were 10 breakout rooms- 8 single country groups and 1 mixed country group. The plenary group was presented with a summary of gaps in meaningful youth engagement as derived from inputs submitted by participants in advance, to discuss in the breakout rooms.

The questions discussed in the groups were:

- Are there additional gaps?
- How can we address these gaps?
- As a group, come up with 3 recommendations and select a key recommendation.

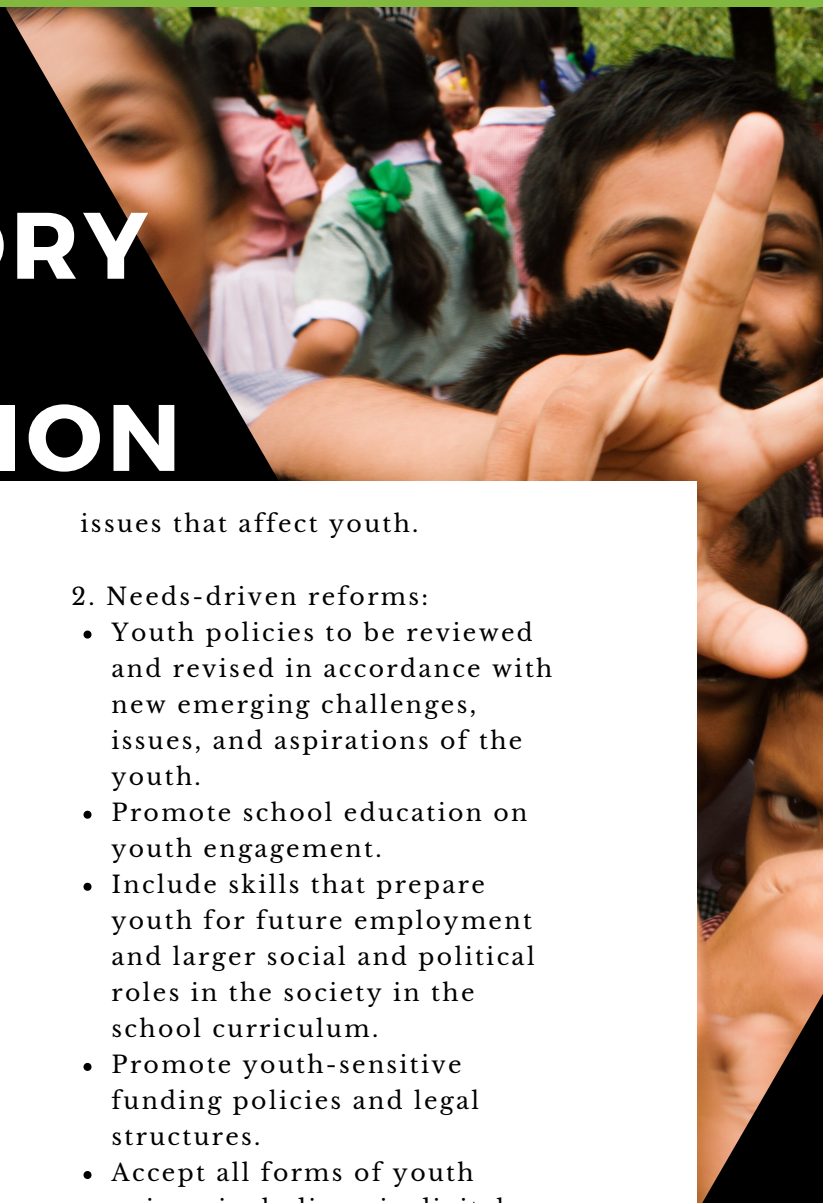
Following are the key recommendations made in this session:

1. Enabling political framework:
 - Promote collaboration and dialogues between the government and young people
 - Structure youth parliament
 - Strengthen political empowerment of youth.
 - Involve youth in governance through central and state-level youth-led committees.
 - Reform laws for unspoken

issues that affect youth.

2. Needs-driven reforms:
 - Youth policies to be reviewed and revised in accordance with new emerging challenges, issues, and aspirations of the youth.
 - Promote school education on youth engagement.
 - Include skills that prepare youth for future employment and larger social and political roles in the society in the school curriculum.
 - Promote youth-sensitive funding policies and legal structures.
 - Accept all forms of youth voices, including via digital methods.
3. Inclusiveness:
 - Include youth in decision-making.
 - Include marginalized youth groups (LGBTQ, persons with disabilities, etc)
 - Strengthen or develop platforms that are working for youth
 - Implement awareness sessions for youth rights and involvement of young people in action projects.

A few groups reported back to the plenary to share the discussions made in their breakout room.



5th July, 2021

PREPARATORY YOUTH CONSULTATION

Most young people voted that recommendations for the 'Enabling political framework' category are of the highest priority. Within this category, the key recommendations made include the establishment of a structured youth parliament and the inclusion of youth in political decisions.

Needs-driven reforms such as encouraging school education on youth engagement and recommendations for inclusiveness or marginalized groups in youth engagement follow closely as top-priority recommendations according to the poll.

The last session for the Preparatory youth consultation on 5th July was focused on learning effective communication skills and strategies. Ms. Randima Jayasinghe from UNFPA made a presentation and shared essential skills needed to communicate effectively with policymakers and effective strategies to do so.

issues that affect youth.

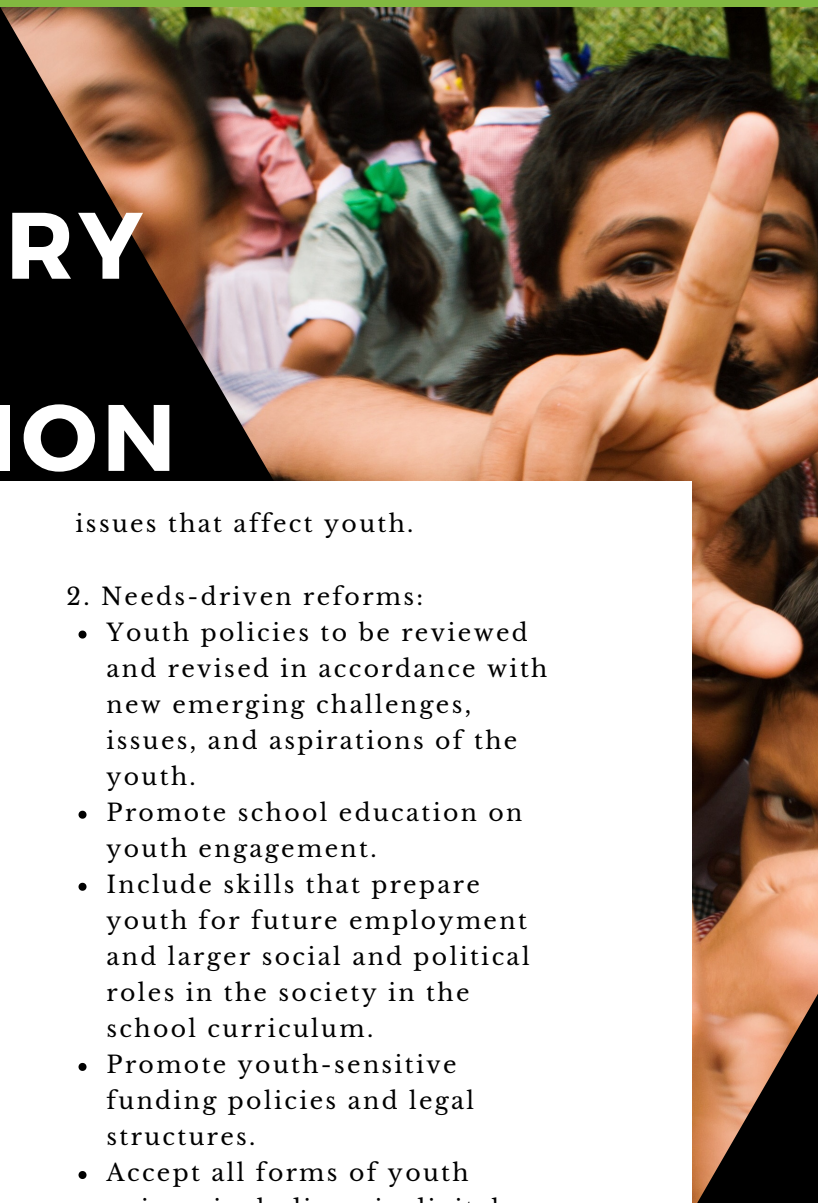
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8th July, 2021

INTER- GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

The International Dialogue of the Asian Parliamentarians and Youth Advocates on Youth and Meaningful Youth Engagement was held on the 8th July and saw a total participation of over 140 participants.

A detailed report has been developed by APDA for the intergenerational dialogue and is available on the Resource folder (link shared at the end of this report).



Panel Discussion with MP participants and Youth participants during the Intergenerational Dialogue

MP participant from Sri Lanka sharing his thoughts



QUOTES FROM YOUTH

“It is truly important to have a discussion with duty-bearers and political leaders in our country for them to hear our young people's call to action. The Intergenerational Dialogue paved the way in creating a much open space for the young people to freely and safely speak out our demands and on how they can meaningfully engage in nation-building. It helped ensure that we were being heard by our duty-bearers and political leaders. Many young people want to share our thoughts and ideas with our leaders, we just lack a platform to do so.”

- Alex Bernal, Philippines

“The Intergenerational Dialogue gave me a different perspective on what is happening on two sides of the dialogue. Sometimes it's not the reluctance of the people in power to help or implement changes but the absence of clarity for the right way to go with the change. That is why meaningful engagement with youth is important. It was nice to know that the people in power are as enthusiastic as the youth in bringing change to the current climate of work regarding policies for youth to benefit the community as a whole.”

- Karma Sangay Phuntsho, Bhutan

QUOTES FROM YOUTH

“Young people make a significant contribution to new ideas, social advancement, and political change, yet are still excluded from the majority of involvement, engagement, and opportunity. Things have become increasingly difficult and stressful for everyone throughout COVID-19. However, I am grateful for this dialogue which allowed me and over 100 other adolescents to meet Members of Parliaments, CSOs, and UN representatives in one location. The event, which included parliamentarians, stakeholders, and youths, really helped both the party and the youth grasp the issues, opportunities, and solutions.”

- Situ Shrestha, Nepal

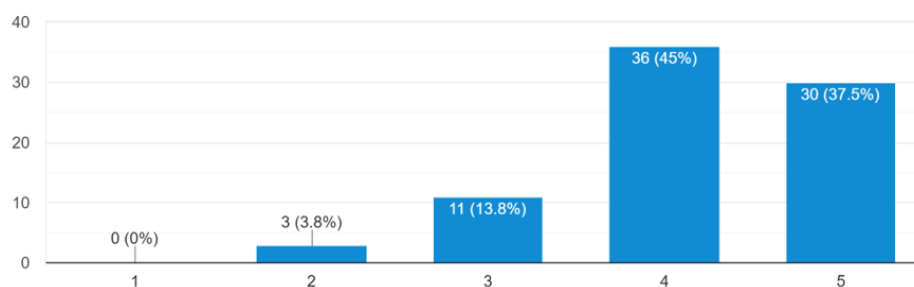
FEEDBACK BY YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

An Evaluation form was shared with participants of both the intergenerational dialogue and preparatory youth consultation. The survey was completed by 83 participants. Following were some of the findings from the survey:

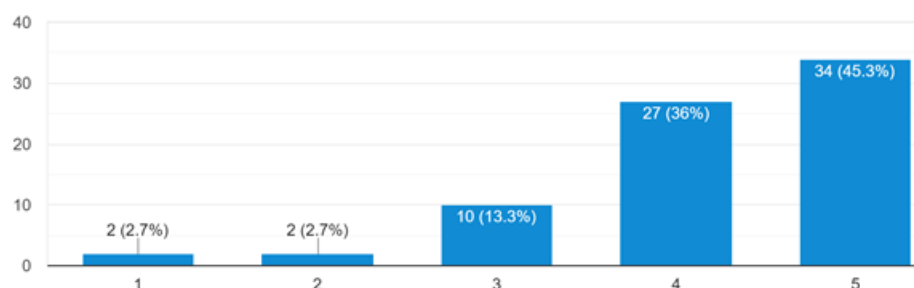
1. The majority of the participants felt that their expectations were met by the different sessions, in both the Youth Consultation and the Plenary Dialogue.

(In the following poll results, 5 represents most satisfactory.)

1. Did the youth consultation meet its overall objective and your expectation?
80 responses



1. Did the intergenerational dialogue meet its overall objective and your expectation?
75 responses



FEEDBACK BY YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

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2. Most of the participants felt that they could fully participate in the breakout room group discussions either by speaking or through chat. However, 10% of participants in the Youth Consultation and 17% in the Intergenerational Dialogue said they didn't participate at all. They felt that they couldn't participate because of connectivity issues and time restrictions. The majority also felt that the group size was too big.

3. When asked what follow-up activities the participants were interested to engaged in at their country-level, major votes were received by:

- a) Involvement in activities organized by youth-led/focused organizations such as Y-PEER
- b) Follow up meetings with parliamentarians and other youth advocates in one's country.

4. When asked what follow-up activities the participants were interested to engage in at the Asia-Pacific Regional level, major votes were received by

- a) Exchange of good practices in meaningful youth engagement with youth advocates from other countries
- b) Follow-up dialogues with parliamentarians and youth advocates from other countries.

5. Some suggestions on support needed to enhance skills as a youth advocate included:

- Capacity-building training for effective communication and public speaking.
- Fundraising and partnership development training.
- Financial support/ small grants
- Platforms to exchange ideas and good practices

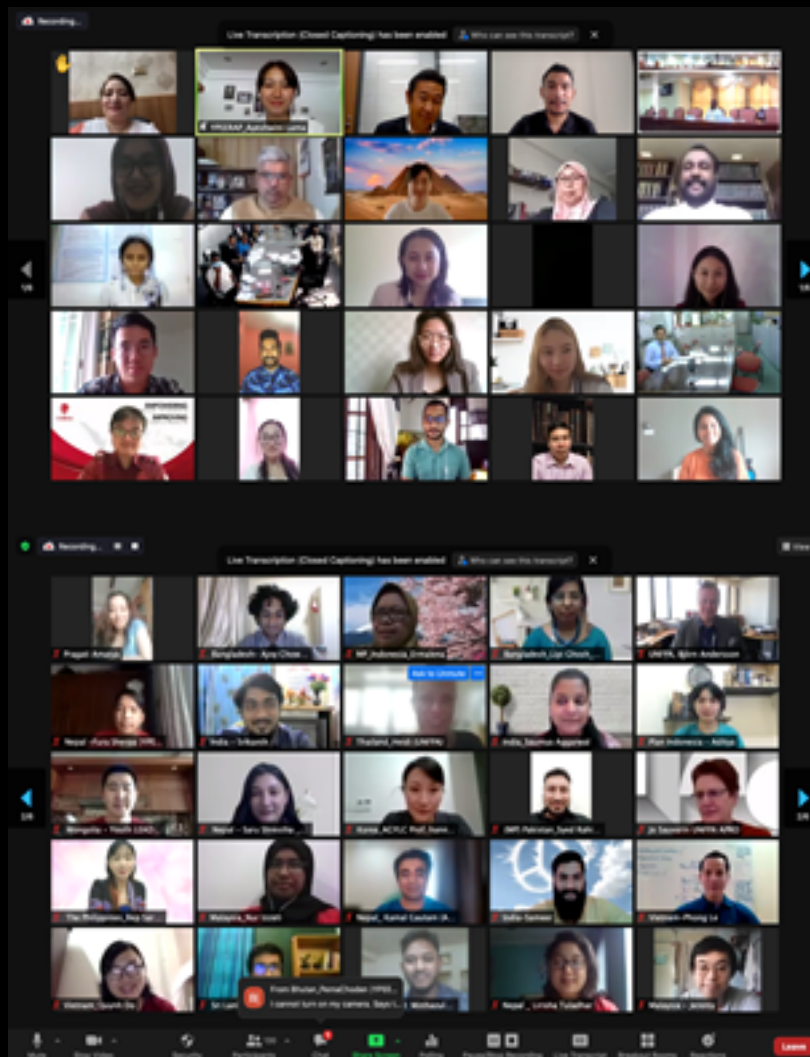
CONCLUSION AND RESOURCES

The Intergenerational Dialogue and the preparatory youth consultation collectively had over 140 participants from over 36 countries and Members of parliaments from many different countries in the Asia Pacific Region.

The interactive sessions on meaningful youth engagement were able to carry on conversations about the future of youth-adult partnership and further emphasize the importance of meaningful youth partnership.

A complete set of materials used for and developed from the consultation and dialogue are made available for reference and future use via this [google folder](#).

The recording of the sessions; presentations used; group discussions made on jamboard; mentimeter results; summary of gaps, good practices and mechanisms; and safeguarding guidelines can all be found in this [resource folder](#).



We would like to give special thanks to our sub-group facilitators:

Samir Kumar Paul, Lipi Ghosh, Iris Pi,
Kuenzang Dema Norbu, Pema Choden Dorji,
Karma Sangay Phuntsho, Situ Shrestha,
Fura Gelzen Sherpa, Maria Iqbal Shah,
Maryam Ghulami, Rosemary Pawih, Ram Dulip,
Alexander Bernal

The resources to this Intergenerational Dialogue and Pre Youth Consultation, including the detailed report on the Intergenerational Dialogue by APDA, are archived and available on the google folder:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VkEnwmn7Gk8NKfTC7MSj3M9LixBp9lCm?usp=sharing>



Visit the Y-PEER Asia Pacific Centre official website for future opportunities:

www.ypeerap.org

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