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# Youth, Peace and Security

Finland's National Action Plan  
2021–2024

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# Youth, Peace and Security

## Finland's National Action Plan 2021–2024

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## Youth, Peace and Security: Finland's National Action Plan 2021–2024

### Finland's National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security 2021–2024

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**Abstract**

The UN Security Council Resolution 2250 Youth, Peace and Security, adopted in 2015, and the subsequent Resolutions 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) recognise the positive and active role of youth in preventing and resolving conflicts, building peace, and preventing violent extremism. Member States must take the needs and perspectives of youth into consideration and encourage young people to take part in decision-making and all stages of peace processes.

Finland has prepared its first National Action Plan on the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security in collaboration with active youth and representatives of youth organisations, central government, research institutes and civil society. The Action Plan specifies five priorities: participation; prevention; partnerships; protection; and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The goals and actions apply to Finland's actions both at home and globally. The Action Plan's cross-cutting theme is intersectionality, while other important themes are climate change and new technologies.

The Action Plan will be implemented by different branches of government and civil society representatives. The implementation of the Action Plan will be followed by a monitoring group, which will submit a mid-term report and a final report to Parliament.

**Keywords** UN, foreign and security policy, peace, youth, crisis management, development cooperation, non-discrimination

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## Nuoret, rauha ja turvallisuus

### Suomen kansallinen toimintaohjelma YK:n turvallisuusneuvoston päätöslauselman Nuoret, rauha ja turvallisuus toimeenpanemiseksi 2021–2024

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#### Tiivistelmä

YK:n turvallisuusneuvoston vuonna 2015 hyväksymä päätöslauselma 2250 "Nuoret, rauha ja turvallisuus" ja sitä seuranneet päätöslauselmat 2419 (2018) ja 2535 (2020) tunnistavat nuorten myönteisen ja aktiivisen roolin konfliktien ehkäisyssä ja ratkaisemisessa, rauhanrakentamisessa sekä väkivaltaisen ekstremismin ehkäisemisessä. Jäsenmaiden tulee ottaa nuorten tarpeet ja näkökulmat huomioon sekä lisätä nuorten osallistumista päätöksentekoon ja rauhanprosessien kaikkiin vaiheisiin.

Suomen ensimmäinen kansallinen toimintaohjelma YK:n turvallisuusneuvoston Nuoret, rauha ja turvallisuus -pätöslauselman toimeenpanemiseksi on laadittu yhdessä aktiivisten nuorten ja nuorisjärjestöjen, valtionhallinnon, tutkimuslaitosten ja kansalaisyhteiskunnan kanssa. Toimintaohjelmassa on viisi painopistettä: osallistuminen, ennaltaehkäisy, kumppanuudet, suojeleu sekä aseistariisunta, kotiutuminen ja integroituminen takaisin yhteiskuntaan. Tavoitteet ja toimet koskevat paitsi Suomen toimintaa kotimaassa, myös kansainvälisesti. Toimintaohjelman läpileikkaava teema on intersektionaalisuus, ja muita tärkeitä teemoja ovat ilmastonmuutos ja uudet teknologiat.

Toimintaohjelmaa toimeenpaneavat eri hallinnonalat sekä kansalaisyhteiskunnan toimijat. Toimintaohjelman toimeenpanoa seurataan seurantaryhmässä, ja toimeenpanosta raportoidaan eduskunnalle toimintakauden puolivälissä ja lopussa.

**Asiasanat** YK, ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka, rauha, nuoret, kriisinhallinta, kehitysyhteistyö, yhdenvertaisuus

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## Unga, fred och säkerhet: Finlands nationella handlingsplan 2021–2024

### Finlands nationella handlingsplan för genomförandet av FN:s säkerhetsråds resolution Unga, fred och säkerhet 2021–2024

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FN:s säkerhetsråds resolution 2250 "Unga, fred och säkerhet" från 2015 och de därpå följande resolutionerna 2419 (2018) och 2535 (2020) identifierar de ungas positiva och aktiva roll när det gäller att förebygga och lösa konflikter, bygga upp fred och förebygga våldsbejakande extremism. Medlemsländerna bör beakta de ungas behov och synpunkter samt öka de ungas delaktighet i beslutsfattandet och i alla skeden av fredsprocesser.

Finlands första nationella handlingsplan för genomförandet av FN:s säkerhetsråds resolution Unga, fred och säkerhet har utarbetats i samarbete mellan aktiva unga och ungdomsorganisationer, statsförvaltningen, forskningsinstitut och det civila samhället. Handlingsplanen har fem prioriteringar: delaktighet, förebyggande, partnerskap, skydd samt avväpning, återvändande och återintegrering i samhället. Målen och åtgärderna gäller inte bara Finlands verksamhet i hemlandet utan också internationellt. Handlingsplanens genomgående tema är intersektionalitet, och andra viktiga teman är klimatförändringarna och ny teknik.

Handlingsplanen genomförs av olika förvaltningsområden och det civila samhällets aktörer. En uppföljningsgrupp följer genomförandet av handlingsplanen, och det rapporteras till riksdagen om genomförandet i mitten och i slutet av verksamhetsperioden.

**Nyckelord** FN, utrikes- och säkerhetspolitik, fred, unga, krishantering, utvecklingssamarbete, jämlikhet**ISBN PDF** 978-952-281-368-8**ISSN PDF** 2737-0844**ISBN tryckt** 978-952-281-364-0**ISSN tryckt** 2490-0621**URN-adress** <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-281-368-8>

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## FOREWORD

Globally, 600 million young people, i.e. a quarter of the world's youth, live in fragile countries or countries that are affected by or recovering from conflict. Despite their activeness, young people are often excluded from official decision-making and peace processes. Young people are typically seen as victims or security risks and not as a positive resource for achieving and maintaining lasting peace. The national security situation varies from country to country, and each country has its own challenges. Wherever they live, young people have a lot to offer in building and preserving stable societies around the world.

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted its first resolution on youth, peace and security (Resolution 2250). It recognises the positive and active role of young people in peace and security. The roots of the resolution stem from the efforts of youth organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to raise awareness of the role of young people in peace and security themes and the need to create an international framework for this topic. Resolution 2250, and Resolutions 2419 and 2535 which were adopted in 2018 and 2020, call on Member States to take into account the needs and perspectives of young people and to involve them in all stages of peace processes.

Many young people feel that their work is not taken seriously. Young people often lack confidence in both governments and structures. Young people's participation at the grassroots level is active and innovative. Its impact on conflict prevention and peacebuilding should be utilised more effectively. Many countries have seen examples of how young people's demonstrations and political activism play a strong role in achieving social change. It is also important to enable young people to participate in democratic decision-making. Opportunities for participation are affected by structural inequalities, which may be based on such factors as gender, disability, social class, ethnic group or sexual orientation. In many countries, decision-making power is also seen as linked to authority according to age rather than competence. The right to participate of all young

people must be respected, and they must be offered comprehensive opportunities to participate.<sup>1</sup>

Conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding are long-term priorities of Finland's foreign policy and will continue to be strengthened. Sustainable peace is promoted in a variety of ways, including by supporting grassroots actors, promoting dialogue processes and strengthening international mediation. Conflict resolution requires intervention in the political, economic and social problems underlying conflicts. Finland also promotes sustainable peace in cooperation with NGOs and in multilateral cooperation in international fora. In Finland's peace mediation activities, particular attention is paid to increasing the participation, ownership and agency of women and young people in peace processes. Finland is active in the EU, the UN and its specialised agencies and other international organisations to strengthen the role and rights of young people.

As a pioneer in the theme of Youth, Peace and Security, Finland has the opportunity to set an example in the implementation of the resolution. Finland is strongly committed to promoting the objectives of the resolution and is the first country to announce the preparation of a national action plan. The preparation of the action plan was set out in the 2019 Government Programme. The 2021–2024 action plan documented here is intended to serve as a road map for implementation in order to achieve and maintain sustainable peace in Finland and around the world. The action plan has been produced in cooperation with active young people and youth organisations, the central government, research institutes and civil society. Cooperation in the 2250 Network of Finnish youth actors has been at the centre of the preparation of this action plan to ensure its ownership by young people.

Although Finland is not a country in conflict, it is also necessary to work in Finland to promote peacebuilding and prevent conflicts. Security and conflict prevention must be seen as broad concepts that underpin social stability, citizens' wellbeing and measures to strengthen inclusion. Global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, terrorism, violent extremism, the spread of disinformation and hate speech and migration also affect Finland. In addition, peer violence and bullying, discrimination and mental health issues threaten the well-being of young people in Finland. Problems increasingly accumulate on the shoulders of a struggling minority. Young people have significant and high-quality competencies and expertise in these themes. Sustainable solutions and sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the participation of society as a whole, including young people.

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1 Report of the Secretary-General, Youth, peace and security, 2020.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Youth, Peace and Security

Even before the resolution was adopted, youth organisations and NGOs were emphasising the potential of young people in the areas of peace and security, such as promoting sustainable peace and combating violent extremism. There were calls for an international framework for this topic. Finnish civil society was also strongly active at the beginning of the resolution drafting process. In 2011, the UN Association of Finland, the Scouts of Finland and the National Youth Council Allianssi presented a proposal on the need for a resolution to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. The initiative stressed the right of young people to participate in decision-making and peace work.

The efforts finally paid off when the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security in December 2015. This is an important achievement and is the first thematic resolution relating specifically to young people, peace and security. It recognises the positive role of young people in conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding. Resolution 2250 and the subsequent Resolutions 2419 and 2535, which were adopted unanimously in 2018 and 2020, see young people as important partners in conflict prevention, global peacebuilding and the prevention of violent extremism. Resolution 2250 identifies five pillars of action: participation, prevention, partnerships, protection, and disengagement and reintegration.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In the action plan, disengagement and reintegration are discussed as DDR measures (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration). At the national level, the measures also address reintegration and adjustment following deradicalisation, release from prison or youth detention centre or recovery from social marginalisation.

### ***What is the definition of young people?***

The definition of young people varies between countries and international organisations. In Finland, according to the Youth Act, young people are people under 29 years of age, while Resolution 2250 limits the definition to ages 18–29 years. In Finland’s national action plan 2250, young people include all 15–29-year-olds. The definition is based on a 2019 report by Allianssi commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and on the annual Youth Barometer. Youth is often seen as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. It features various milestones on the way towards autonomy or adulthood. The transition does not always happen as expected, for example due to conflicts, crises and significant changes that can force young people into adulthood prematurely or prevent them from gaining autonomy.

Young people are not a homogeneous social group. The connecting factor is mainly age and age-related experiences. Socially, young people are a heterogeneous group defined by a number of other factors. The diversity of young people has been taken into account in the preparation of the action plan, since meaningful participation requires the involvement of diverse groups of young people. To promote the equality of young people, intersectionality has been adopted as a cross-cutting theme in the action plan. Intersectionality draws attention to individuals’ intersecting factors and complexities.

Source: Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi: Experiences and views of peace and security among youth in Finland. 2019.

Resolution 2250 encourages Member States to increase the participation of young people in decision-making at all levels in order to prevent and resolve conflicts. It also encourages young people to be involved in peace negotiations and agreements and to guarantee the protection of civilians, especially young people and their human rights in armed conflicts. The resolution calls for quality training for young people in the preservation of peace and for the promotion of peaceful, equitable, non-discriminatory, multicultural and interreligious dialogue. An environment should be created for young people in which they can promote social cohesion and receive support in activities aimed at preventing violence.



**Image 1.** In 2017, Finland's UN youth representative Milja Suihko participated in a ministerial 2250 theme event organised by Jordan. One of the youth representatives on the panel was Hajer Sharief from Lebanon, and speeches were heard from Secretary-General Mr Guterres and the foreign ministers of Jordan and Norway. Photo: Henri Salonen.

The Member States are also invited to create and strengthen partnerships that promote peace, development and equality and to involve young people in peacebuilding and its planning. The resolution emphasises the role of local actors in combating violent extremism and increasing cohesion. The resolution also calls on the Member States to take into account the needs of young people in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, for example by investing in the employment of young people, increasing capacity<sup>3</sup> and supporting organisations led by young people and building peace.

The promotion of human rights forms the central element of the value base on which Finland's foreign and security policy rests. The action plan is based on human rights and broad concepts of peace and security. In the context of peace and security, attention is paid to diverse measures promoting the stability and well-being of societies in addition to conflicts and official peace processes. Young people's participation in peace processes

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<sup>3</sup> Capacity refers to the opportunities and abilities of young people, which can be promoted, for example, through equal education. Promoting meaningful participation of young people requires identification of capacity and its development.



is considered to include activities at different levels that promote conflict prevention and sustainable peace. Activities at different levels can include, for example, innovative peace work created by young people on their own initiative, or state-organised peace promotion activities directed at young people. For example, equal access to education, financial stability and mental and physical well-being help prevent conflicts and promote social stability. The freedom of expression and action of young actors must be guaranteed, and they must be protected against harassment and violence.

Finland is one of the pioneers in the topic of youth, peace and security.<sup>4</sup> Finland was the first country to announce the preparation of a national action plan for 2250. Finland's action plan and the inclusive process leading to it can serve as examples for others to develop action plans in a participatory manner together with youth organisations. An active 2250 network consisting of Finnish youth actors operates in Finland. The implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda has been taken into account, for example, in the 2020 Foreign and Security Policy Report, Finland's Africa strategy and the activities of Women, Peace and Security (1325).

## 1.2 Implementation of the resolution worldwide

Several regional organisations have incorporated the 2250 agenda into their activities. The UN, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are the most important actors in the implementation of the resolution and the Finnish national action plan. These organisations are also key channels for advancing the implementation in Finland.

Following the adoption of the resolution, the youth, peace and security theme has become an integral part of the UN Security Council's thematic agenda. For example, the Youth, Peace and Security perspective has increasingly been taken into account in the situations in Afghanistan and Syria. Discussions on climate change and security also often touch on young people's participation. The UN Youth Strategy adopted in 2018 emphasises young people's participation in issues such as development, peace and security. The role of young people has also been taken into account in some political operations and peacekeeping operations. An example is the youth advisor role in Somalia (UNSO). In February 2021, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) published its own strategic action plan for Youth, Peace and Security. PBC has also created opportunities

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<sup>4</sup> The youth, peace and security thematics and the 2250 Agenda refer to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020). In common parlance, Resolution 2250 often refers to the whole agenda.

for young peacebuilders to present their work and recommendations in PBC's country meetings and thematic discussions.

UN agencies and programmes are involved in a wide range of work to promote the theme of youth, peace and security. The responsibility for the topic's coordination lies with the UN Peace Building Support Office (PBSO)<sup>5</sup>, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the youth, peace and security secretariat set up by them in the areas of humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is also actively working to increase the participation of young people in peace and security issues. The role of a youth representative has been set up under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General's office and is currently served by Jayathma Wickramanayake. The youth representative's task is to promote the empowerment and meaningful participation of young people. The Office of the Youth Representative also includes a secretariat coordinating the UN's Youth 2030 strategy. The strategy serves as a framework for the whole UN regarding work with young people on peace and security, human rights and development cooperation. "The Missing Peace", a key study in the UN's 2250 work, is the basis for the global 2250 agenda and contains recommendations for implementing the resolution. Regional organisations are also active in promoting 2250 thematics. The UN in cooperation with the African Union (AU) has also increased the involvement of young people in local peace processes in Somalia and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa.

The role of the European Union in the 2250 work has grown in recent years. In 2018, the Union adopted the Council conclusions on the thematics.<sup>6</sup> Also in 2018, the EU published a youth strategy and targets for 2019–2027. They emphasise the role of young people in all areas. The European Commission's Solidarity Corps supports young people's civic engagement and their involvement in assistance in Europe and beyond, for example by supporting the participation of young people in various projects that strengthen local communities. The EU aims to mainstream the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in its institutions and Member States by increasing funding, opportunities for young people to participate and programmes aimed at young people.<sup>7</sup> A joint coalition of civil society and Member States is being established at EU level to promote the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

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5 The UN Peace Building Support Office (PBSO) has been part of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) since January 2019.

6 Council conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe (2018/C 195/05)

7 UNOY Peacebuilders (2019), Mapping the progress of Youth, Peace and Security in the EU. The Hague.

### *The first international symposium on the positive role of young people in peace processes*

As part of the implementation of resolutions and the promotion of 2250 themes, the first international symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes was organised in Helsinki in March 2019. Organised jointly by the UN, Finland, Colombia and Qatar, the symposium brought together some 100 mediation experts, mediators, researchers and influencers to network and share experiences. The event centred on young people's experiences of peace and security issues. Approximately half of the participants were young people from conflict zones with personal experience of peace processes. The Helsinki Youth Symposium initiated a process aimed at promoting the implementation of Resolution 2250 and subsequent resolutions internationally, regionally and locally. A high-level follow-up conference will be organised in Qatar in 2022.



**Image 2.** The first international symposium on the positive role of young people in peace processes, 5–6 March 2019. Photo: Nikke Puskala.

### ***International cooperation***

National action plans create opportunities for cooperation with other countries. Finland has shared experiences and best practices of the action plan drafting process with Nigeria, for example. Young people, peace and security is one of the key themes of cooperation between Finland and Nigeria. In spring 2020, a successful video conference was held between the 2250 network in Finland and Nigerian actors to share experiences. In addition, the CMI has been an active player in the Youth, Peace and Security sector in North-East Nigeria and, more broadly, in the Lake Chad basin (LCB), including Niger, Cameroon and Chad. The 2250 national action plans of Finland and Nigeria provide an excellent opportunity for further cooperation around the 2250 themes.

The OSCE underlines the importance of young people in matters of peace and security. Action has been strengthened, for example, by means of declarations by the Council of Ministers<sup>8</sup>. However, commitments have remained limited in the consensus organisation, and Finland alongside other Nordic countries wanted more active measures that would be at the level of the UN commitments. Effort is made to increase the participation of young people in the “Perspectives 20–30 Youth Online Academy” initiative, in which young people with the OSCE will devise new ways of responding to security challenges. The OSCE also has several projects in south-east and eastern Europe and in Central Asia, and an effort is being made to mainstream the youth perspective into them.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the OSCE President has a special representative for young people and security, and the organisation has an informal “young people and security” friendship group, in which Finland is also active.

The development of youth policy is also central to the activities of the Council of Europe. The task of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe is to draw up guidelines, programmes and funding plans for the development of youth policy. The Youth Department also supports participation and awareness-raising activities aimed at young people in the form of funding and education.<sup>10</sup> The Council of Europe has a new youth

<sup>8</sup> Declaration on Youth and Security (2015) & Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts (2018).

<sup>9</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Youth.

<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe, Youth.

strategy published in 2020. Its priorities include promoting coexistence, peace and inclusiveness in societies.

Young people's contribution to security issues is also being taken into account by NATO. In November 2020, Secretary-General Stoltenberg and the Munich Security Conference organised for the first time the NATO 2030 Youth Summary, which brought together NATO citizens aged 18–35 to discuss the political and military strengthening of NATO and the adoption of a more global approach in the Alliance. In spring 2021, the Secretary-General consulted the Young Leaders group about his upcoming recommendations on strengthening the political role of the Alliance. The group recommended inclusion and education of young people in e.g. the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and in cooperation with international organisations such as the African Union.

Of international NGOs, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), Search for Common Ground (SfCG) and Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (GCYPS) in particular promote the theme of Youth, Peace and Security. Of the regional actors, the African Union has incorporated the 2250 agenda as an integral part of its activities. In August 2020, the AU published a 10-year 2250 action plan and a 2250 reference framework designed for the African continent. The AU had already appointed a youth representative in 2018 to promote the 2250 agenda in Africa through a number of practical initiatives and actions.<sup>11</sup>

The Security Council resolution is binding on all Member States. Individual Member States are each responsible for their contribution to the implementation of the resolution. In addition to Finland, at least Colombia, Gambia, Nigeria and the Philippines have announced that they will prepare a national action plan. National Youth, Peace and Security coalitions have been established in Cameroon, Jordan, Nigeria and Sri Lanka in addition to Finland. Coalitions are mainly led by young people and supported by states. There are many initiatives to promote young people's participation around the world. Although some Member States do not yet have action plans, in many countries work is already under way to improve the status of young people. There have been examples of young people's participation in peace processes since the adoption of the resolution in e.g. Colombia. In the Philippines, young women have organised interreligious dialogue in communities affected by conflict.<sup>12</sup>

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11 In Africa, the proportion of young people in the population is particularly high, and the majority of young people in the world live in the African continent. (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, Youth Empowerment.)

12 Report of the Secretary-General, Youth, peace and security, 2020.



## 1.3 Youth, peace and security in Finland

Conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding are long-term priorities of Finland's foreign policy. Finland emphasises an inclusive approach to peace processes and the importance of ownership, inclusion and agency of women and young people in them. Finland has supported the capacity of young mediators, for example in Myanmar, through the UNFPA project<sup>13</sup>. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been funding the work of Finnish NGOs for a number of years in conflict and reconstruction situations in line with Resolution 2250. This has strengthened the participation, integration and protection of young people and the prevention of conflicts.

Finnish NGOs also work extensively to promote the implementation of Resolution 2250. For example, the programmes of Finnish Church Aid and the peace network of religious and traditional actors involve close cooperation with local and regional youth actors to promote the 2250 objectives.

Finland is active in the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security both nationally and internationally. The third action plan covers the period 2018–2021. It includes objectives and measures in all areas of the 1325 agenda: peace processes, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the security sector and crisis management, and the protection of women and girls and the realisation of rights in crises. It is important to find synergies between the Women, Peace and Security and the Youth, Peace and Security agendas. These include young women and intergenerational mentoring and dialogue.

Finland has a strong legal basis and good practices for involving young people. The right to participate is enshrined in the Finnish Constitution, and the right of children under the age of 18 to participate and influence is also an obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finland has special expertise in strengthening young people's opportunities to participate: student union activities were enshrined in the General Upper Secondary Schools Act in 1983 and youth councils in the Local Government Act in 2015. In addition, young people's opportunities for participation, influencing and being heard in issues related to national youth work and youth policy were enshrined in the Youth Act in 2016.

In Finland, increasing young people's civic engagement is one of the key priorities of the National Democracy Programme and the National Child Strategy as well as an important

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<sup>13</sup> Building the Next Generation of Mediators in Myanmar to Support the Implementation of Peace Agreements and Political Dialogue.

theme of the National Youth Work and Policy Programme (VANUPO 2020–2023)<sup>14</sup>. Strengthening young people’s competence capital through democracy and human rights education in schools and educational institutions is essential. VANUPO also emphasises equal opportunities in exerting influence. Finland’s UN Youth League programme has been operational since 1997, and the first climate delegate was appointed in 2011.

## 1.4 A changing world: climate change and new technologies

### *The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people, peace and security*

At the global level, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been particularly serious in countries affected by conflicts. The pandemic is affecting the delivery of humanitarian aid, peace operations and peace processes in general. State leaders can exploit emergency conditions and use them in order to restrict human rights and fundamental freedoms or drive military action in other countries. The pandemic has increased inequality, as it has had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable groups in societies. Domestic violence and violence against women have increased considerably, and isolation has increased feelings of loneliness. Youth unemployment has increased, and many young people are unable to attend school. In Finland, too, the pandemic has increased inequality and affected young people’s access to social and health services. The pandemic has increased mental health problems, domestic violence and loneliness among young people. The negative effects of the crisis have hit vulnerable young people especially hard, and the situation of young people in the asylum and family reunification process raises concerns. Mental well-being among young LGBT people has also deteriorated. Studying from home leads to inequality among young people, as support networks vary greatly. Despite the challenges, youth organisations have been innovative in developing activities and moving them online. For example, TikTok and Instagram have been actively used in youth organisations’ campaigns.

Sources: International Crisis Group: COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch Resilient Realities: Global State of Youth Civil Society Report

14 National Youth Work and Policy Programme (VANUPO) 2020–2023

Since the adoption of Resolution 2250, the operating environment has changed both in Finland and globally. Climate change is finally being perceived as one of the biggest global threats, partly because of pressure exerted by young influencers. These changes and trends have also been taken into account in Finland's national action plan. New technologies and the Internet have enabled the creation of new platforms and tools for promoting peace and security. They offer innovative and new opportunities to increase participation and strengthen young people's capacity. Finland aims to identify the opportunities and risks of new technologies in its 2250 work. The coronavirus pandemic has also had significant impacts on young people's health, education, inequality and opportunities to participate. The final extent and severity of the impacts are difficult to assess in the long term. They should nevertheless be taken into account throughout the implementation of the action plan.

Climate change has numerous consequences, such as forced migration and unemployment, which are common background factors in the emergence of conflicts. Global warming is already increasingly affecting people's living environments, livelihoods and well-being. Climate change and loss of biodiversity are the main threats – for example, because food security suffers when farming becomes more difficult and fish stocks become depleted. The lack of natural resources and the weakening of food security are also common background factors in conflicts. Loss of biodiversity and the destruction of natural environments significantly increase the risk of the spread of animal viruses and new epidemics such as COVID-19. The 2250 agenda should therefore be seen in close connection with action against climate change and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Young people play an important role in generating major climate movements and in combating climate change. In addition to activism, however, young people must have access to official decision-making on climate change action. Climate anxiety is common among young people, and their awareness should be channelled into action that advances efforts to combat climate change.

Another important theme especially for young people is new technologies and social media. Technological developments have revolutionised access to information and significantly reduced the threshold for participation. Young people are increasingly aware of their rights and of human rights violations in Finland and around the world. The Internet and social media are important channels for young people to influence society. Young people's creative use of social media should be seen as a serious societal activity. Digital platforms and social media are also used as networking tools in peacemaking and they offer new spaces for discussion. These channels can be used to enable and encourage young people's participation.



**Image 3.** Studying in general upper secondary school. Photo: Elina Manninen/Kuvatoimisto Keksi/Finland Promotion Board.

It is easy to develop the inclusiveness of decision-making and peace processes through social media, but superficial participation must be avoided. In terms of equal opportunities for participation, it is important to take into account challenges relating to education, poverty and the accessibility of technology, especially for young people in fragile countries. Online harassment, discrimination and hate speech are significant problems for democracy and participation. They affect women, girls and vulnerable people in particular. Therefore, special attention should be paid to inclusiveness also in the online environment. Eradicating hate speech and harassment must be a priority for states, so that everyone can express themselves in a safe environment, including on digital platforms, and everyone's right to participate online is safeguarded. From an international perspective, it is important that an open, reliable and functional Internet is available to as many people as possible. Equality issues must also be taken into account when developing new technologies. There is still a lack of international regulation on digital platforms and new technologies.

## 1.5 Towards a national 2250 action plan

In 2018, Finland announced that it would start preparing an action plan to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security. The preparation of the action plan was also set out in the 2019 Government Programme “Inclusive and competent Finland – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society”:

***“Finland will continue to support activities related to the Youth, Peace and Security theme, and will prepare a national action plan on the implementation of UN Resolution 2250.”***

The preparation of the action plan began by consulting the views of Finnish young people on peace and security. Allianssi’s consultation report<sup>15</sup> commissioned by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was published in spring 2019. Over 300 young people around Finland were heard in the consultations. Nearly 20 actors from the youth sector were involved in the consultations and the peace survey. The report’s findings were incorporated into the action plan. The action plan document was drafted in close cooperation with the 2250 network of youth sector actors, ensuring young people’s ownership of the plan. In addition, central government actors, research institutes and representatives of civil society have participated in the preparation of the action plan.

Finland’s first national action plan covers the period 2021–2024. The purpose of the action plan is to serve as a roadmap for national 2250 work and to set concrete objectives and measures for advancing the 2250 agenda. An important part of the action plan’s implementation is evaluation and monitoring, which is the responsibility of a monitoring group consisting of representatives of ministries, research institutes, youth organisations and other civic actors. In the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, it is also important to facilitate participation for young people who are not involved in any organisation.

The starting points for more extensive youth work and the promotion of Resolution 2250 include the Youth Act, the National Youth Work and Policy Programme (VANUPO) 2020–2023, the Foreign and Security Policy Report 2020 and the National Democracy Programme 2025. In addition, the work is based on the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism 2019, the Meaningful in Finland action plan for preventing hate speech and racism in Finland and promoting social inclusion, and the anti-racism and good demographic relations action plan, which is currently under preparation.

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15 Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi: Experiences and views of peace and security among youth in Finland. 2019.





**Image 4.** An international summer course on environmental mediation held at the Joensuu campus of the University of Eastern Finland in August 2018. Photo: Varpu Heiskanen.

Young people's participation in conflict prevention and peace processes at both national and international level is at the heart of the action plan. The objectives of the action plan differ somewhat depending on whether the focus is national or international; in the latter, attention is focused on countries that are currently affected by or recovering from a conflict. As the challenges at different levels differ somewhat, the objectives must also take into account the need for different measures. At the national level, the main objectives are to expand the opportunities for young people to participate and to increase the safety and well-being of young people. At the same time, the participation of young people in peace processes and peacebuilding, as well as enabling a good life, play a key role in countries affected by conflicts.

## 2 Priority areas and objectives of the action plan

The purpose of Finland's first national 2250 action plan is to serve as a tool and roadmap for the implementation of the resolution. The priority areas are the five pillars of Resolution 2250 for action: participation, prevention, partnerships, protection, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. The cross-cutting theme is intersectionality, which is taken into account in the objectives and actions. This section presents the objectives and actions and the actors responsible for implementation. The objectives are categorised under the priorities of the action plan and concretised through actions. Actions are also partly implemented in the frameworks of other national action plans and projects. The action plan has been prepared in extensive cooperation. This was to ensure that the plan's objectives and actions include measures that, from the viewpoint of the Finnish Government, civil society and especially youth organisations, young people and research institutes, are effective and proven ways to promote the participation of young people in issues related to peace and security in a holistic manner.

### Cross-cutting theme: Intersectionality

The action plan emphasises the equal right to participation by all young people and aims to create opportunities for everyone to influence society. When implementing the action plan, it is important to take into account the impacts of existing structural discrimination and to address them. The cross-cutting theme of the action plan is intersectionality. It means the interconnected nature of factors that influence an individual's identity and position in social hierarchies. These intersecting differences should be examined in relation to each other. They include e.g. sex, social class, age, ethnic background, functional capacity and sexual orientation.<sup>16</sup> When discussing the inclusiveness of peace processes and societal decision-making, it is important to take into account these different factors and their sums, which influence an individual's ability to participate in society. Intersectionality helps to combat multiple discrimination, improve equality for vulnerable groups and better target the measures. It must also be taken into account that problems experienced by young people can differ at national and international level.

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16 National Institute for Health and Welfare, Gender equality.



**Image 5.** A group of polio survivors supported by the Abilis Foundation in Sierra Leone in 2014. Photo: Katja Vis/Abilis archives.

Intersectionality has long been examined in the context of sex and gender, which has emerged as an important theme in peace processes since the adoption of Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security. Resolution 2250 also recognises the position of young women. It is also important to consider other dimensions in addition to sex and gender. For example, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, educational background and social status also affect young people's opportunities to participate in actions for peace and security. Together, these different dimensions also affect social privilege and discrimination. The action plan aims to avoid perpetuating harmful stereotypes which contribute to exclusion from societal decision-making.

Young people's political participation, activeness and opportunities for participation vary globally depending on gender. Internationally, young women's political engagement is minimal, whereas in Finland, young women are politically more active than young men. A common factor, however, is the low representation of women in executive roles, including in Finland. Young men are at high risk of exclusion, and the situation of early school leavers requires early intervention. Narrow, traditionally tough role expectations for boys are unreasonable for boys themselves. They also hinder the advancement of equality and softer values in society as a whole. Young women and girls experience inequality both internationally and in Finland. In particular, sexual violence, harassment and hate speech, including online, threaten the safety of girls. In Finland, young men are statistically

overrepresented both as perpetrators of violence and as victims.<sup>17</sup> Young people's own work to promote peace and security often addresses sex and gender. This kind of work actively strives to increase gender equality and awareness of reproductive and sexual health rights and sexual violence.

Individuals' identities are shaped in youth as a result of the influence of the surrounding society. Young people should thus be offered education that promotes equality and peaceful practices. Social structures that discriminate and exclude people from decision-making must be dismantled. Similarly, an encouraging atmosphere for young people's participation must be promoted, and structures to enable their participation must be created. Globally, a large proportion of young people do not have access to peace education or civic activities. Youth unemployment is high in many countries, and population growth and the coronavirus pandemic are making the situation even more difficult.

Gender and sexual minorities are particularly vulnerable both internationally and nationally. Ethnicity and sexual orientation can increase the feeling of insecurity and the risk of exclusion for young people. Ethnic and religious minorities face major challenges in equal participation and opportunities to influence. The action plan also takes into account the different manifestations of disability and how they affect participation. For example, educational attainment, violence experienced by individuals and outcomes in sexual health and reproductive rights can vary greatly depending on the disability. The action plan aims to address functional capacity as part of a number of intersectional factors, not as a separate category. Although some minorities experience more discrimination, the aim is to avoid simplification and seeing the vulnerability of a specific group or individual as one-dimensional. In many cases, an individual is subjected to multiple discrimination and, for example, a woman belonging to an ethnic minority is in a weaker position than a woman belonging to the majority population. It is therefore not possible to generalise, for example, that all women and girls experience identical problems despite any intersecting differences.

An intersectional approach will be promoted in the action plan by involving different types of young people and youth organisations and by providing them with the opportunity to also participate in the plan's monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the priority areas and objectives are aimed at ensuring equal participation opportunities for all young people, and those who are responsible for the action plan are expected to promote equality. The responsible parties must pay attention to accessibility in their activities. The intersectional approach also means taking into account that some young people need more support in order to play a meaningful role in decision-making. The responsible parties must take this into account in the planning and resourcing of the activities.

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17 Crimeprevention.fi: Gender-based violence.



## 2.1 Priority area 1: Participation

A key objective of Finland's 2250 activities is to increase young people's participation at all levels of decision-making in order to prevent and resolve conflicts and to promote sustainable peace and security. Increasing young people's opportunities to participate and influence can promote their trust not only in their own future, but also in the functioning of societal structures and national, regional and international institutions, and contribute to building sustainable peace. Progress has been made in young people's participation in public debate. For example, voter turnout among young people has increased. However, the meaningful participation of young people<sup>18</sup>, especially in matters related to peace and security, remains a challenge both in Finland and internationally.



**Image 6.** The network of religious and traditional actors supports young people around the world to promote peace and develop youth-oriented anti-violence action. On 4–6 December 2019, the Peace Network organised a youth forum in Jakarta with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in cooperation with international partners, the African Union and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The forum brought together young people from Africa and South-East Asia as part of the international peace programme, the Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove). In the pictures, youth forum participants plan cooperation and share best practices to tackle violent extremism in communities. Photo: Wahyu Kusumo/Finn Church Aid.

<sup>18</sup> Meaningful participation is defined in the action plan as participation that is meaningful for young people themselves and for society as a whole and allows them to influence society in a concrete way.

Meaningful participation requires that all young people have the opportunity to participate not only in decision-making that concerns them, but also in the planning, implementation and monitoring of such decisions. Meaningful participation of young people requires a reassessment and development of current practices so that they can better reach young people of different backgrounds. In the action plan, young people's participation is seen to work at two interconnected levels. They are 1) influencing and participation in democratic decision-making, and 2) informal influencing e.g. via social media and public demonstrations. The safe participation of young people at both of these levels must be ensured without fear of harassment or violence.

The aim of the action plan is to increase young people's opportunities to participate at all levels of decision-making and in all situations. It is also important to enable participation in exceptional circumstances. The impact of young people's participation can be enhanced by cooperation with young people and youth organisations, positive examples, strengthening young people's capacity, and supporting and mentoring young people. The potential and expertise of immigrant, refugee and diaspora populations of young people on peace and security issues must be recognised. Young people also create a new culture of influencing in various spheres such as social media, sports and the arts. New and innovative ways and places of influencing, dialogue and participation must be sought. The opportunities offered by social media and technological advancements should be utilised in this area.

The parties responsible for implementing the action plan must take into account the diversity and equality of young people. Particular attention must be paid to accessibility and access to opportunities for influencing and participation. In addition to structural barriers, obstacles to participation may include a person's sex, gender identity, functional capacity, ethnic background, sexual orientation, language, nationality, worldview, education, occupation or socio-economic background. Participation opportunities must be strengthened for young people with diverse backgrounds and abilities. All young people, including those with vulnerable characteristics or circumstances, must be guaranteed equal opportunities to participate in decision-making at all levels. Language should be accessible and easy to understand for young people from diverse backgrounds, and they must be given opportunities to obtain information and influence in their own language. Similarly, safety must be ensured in opportunities for participation and exerting influence, for example by preventing and eliminating online harassment and gender-based violence.

Finland will pay particular attention to the inclusiveness and local ownership of peace processes. Internationally, Finland strives to promote the role, influence and meaningful participation of young people at local level in conflict prevention and resolution as well as in post-conflict situations. According to studies, broad-based participation that



also includes young people is essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of peace processes. Finland aims to raise awareness of the positive role of young people in peace processes and to strengthen the capacity of young mediators and peace-builders. The inclusion of local young people in peace processes will also be promoted. Cooperation between authorities and NGOs must be strengthened in order to promote the role of young people.

The positive role and perspectives of young people must also be taken into account in a holistic manner in humanitarian aid operations and more broadly across the continuum of aid work. It means that humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace-promotion are carried out seamlessly and often simultaneously (the triple nexus approach<sup>19</sup>). The 2250 theme should also be promoted across the board in crisis management, and the participation of young people in these activities should be increased.

## **OBJECTIVE 1: Opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to participate at all levels of decision-making have improved, and the role, influence and meaningful participation of young people in conflict prevention and resolution have strengthened.**

**Target 1: Challenges and barriers to meaningful participation of young people have been identified and removed**

### **Measures**

#### **National level**

Finland increases education on youth participation for people working with peace and security topics

#### **Lead responsibility**

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, Crisis Management Centre Finland, Ministry of Justice

<sup>19</sup> The triple nexus approach refers to actions aimed at strengthening the coherence and complementarity of cooperation between international development, humanitarian aid and peace-promotion. The aim is to promote positive links between different activities and actors and to generate a holistic overview of the collective results to which the actors contribute in their own activities. The Development Policy Committee's analysis report: Greater than the sum of its parts – Why is a triple nexus approach needed for Finland's development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and peace actions? March 2021.

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland takes action to prevent youth marginalisation and recognises the specific marginalisation risk of boys and young men	Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of the Interior
National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland supports research that generates knowledge and understanding of factors that promote youth inclusion and the impact of activities in peace and security matters	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland raises awareness among young people from diverse backgrounds about participation opportunities for young people and strengthens young people's capacity to participate in societal decision-making, paying special attention to women and girls at international level	all
Finland pays special attention to the accessibility, reachability, safety and inclusiveness of participation opportunities for young people	all
Finland supports young people's participation in political decision-making, for example by inviting youth representatives to preparatory working groups and by supporting political parties in youth inclusion party activities, decision-making and elections	Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland eliminates obstacles relating to various manifestations of disability and increases participation opportunities for young people with disabilities	all

## Target 2: Meaningful participation of young people in decision-making on issues related to peace and security has increased

### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland supports the participation of youth representatives in key meetings and their planning as part of the meeting delegation	All responsible ministries
Finland develops the representativeness and participation of youth delegate programmes	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, NGOs

<b>National level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland supports young people's participation in training programmes (JPO, UNV, EU civil crisis management operations) in international organisations	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Crisis Management Centre Finland
<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland raises awareness of the positive influence of youth participation in peace and security matters	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defence, NGOs
Finland develops new and innovative participation and influencing opportunities for young people	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, NGOs

### **Target 3: Awareness of the positive role of young people and the numbers of young people in peace processes, mediation and transition processes have increased at international level**

#### **Measures**

<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland will strengthen young peacebuilders' capacity through training and intergenerational mentoring	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
<b>International level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland promotes young peacebuilders' mutual dialogue and sharing of experiences	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland organises training for officials and other actors on the inclusion of young people's voices in various stages of peace processes	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland promotes the 2250 perspective and young people's participation and influencing opportunities in international treaties, resolutions and commitments across the preparation, negotiation, implementation and monitoring stages	Ministry for Foreign Affairs

## Target 4: The 2250 perspective in development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peace work has become stronger

### Measures

National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland promotes the integration of the 2250 perspective in the mandates of crisis management operations and missions	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence
Finland promotes the integration of the 2250 perspective in crisis management training and exercises and related international discussions	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Crisis Management Centre Finland, Ministry of Defence, Defence Command, FINCENT
Finland raises awareness among young people about peace work, crisis management and humanitarian activities and related themes	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Culture, Crisis Management Centre Finland, NGOs
In accordance with its humanitarian aid policy, Finland pays special attention to the position of people with disabilities and to the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls in emergency situations	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland pays special attention to the 2250 perspective in development cooperation	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs

## 2.2 Priority area 2: Prevention

Prevention of conflicts and violence will save lives in particular, but also important resources. More attention should be paid to preventing violence as an effective means of achieving peace.<sup>20</sup> Preventive measures aim to address structural factors underlying violence and conflicts, such as inequality, discrimination, marginalisation and human rights violations. In line with the intersectional approach, attention must also be paid to multiple discrimination, and efforts must be made to dismantle structures that sustain it. Human rights are a key basis for the work around youth, peace and security. Respect for human rights, their protection and realisation also help prevent conflicts.

Young people should be seen not only as victims or potential perpetrators of violence, but also as positive assets and agents in preventing discrimination and violence and in promoting equality and a culture of peace. Climate change is a major security threat. It is important to combat environmental problems, such as pollution and loss of biodiversity, in order to mitigate climate change. They exacerbate risks and already have an increasing impact on people's living environments, livelihoods, well-being and perception of security.<sup>21</sup> The positive role of young people must also be recognised in the fight against climate change and environmental pollution, in the protection of biodiversity, and in related decision-making.

The exclusion of young people as a security matter and societal issue and challenge has long been recognised nationally and globally. Furthermore, poverty, lack of prospects and lack of access to education and livelihoods increase the risk of continuing the cycle of post-conflict violence and returning to armed groups. Prevention of marginalisation can also prevent violent radicalisation, as extremist movements often seek to recruit marginalised young people who seek a sense of community and purpose. The potential of young people in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism has also been better recognised in recent years. The UN Secretary-General's Programme of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016)<sup>22</sup> emphasises a holistic approach to these security threats and recognises the potential of young people as peacebuilders.

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20 UN and the World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*.

21 Lotta Haikkola and Sami Myllyniemi (eds.), *Youth Barometer 2019*.

22 YK, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*.



**Image 7.** Business skills training in Kampala. Photo: Finnish Refugee Council/Outi Neuvonen.

Finland emphasises the importance of preventive measures, and the important role of young people is also increasingly recognised at national level. In Finland's National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism (2019–2023)<sup>23</sup>, young people are identified as a major asset in preventing violent extremism, building peace and reducing confrontation. The aim is to involve young people in work to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism and in its planning and implementation. Youth organisations are involved as expert members in the national cooperation network, which coordinates the work under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior. These youth organisations have lead responsibility for some of the measures in cooperation with the authorities. Finland will continue to actively implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism as part of its 2250 work.

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<sup>23</sup> Ministry of the Interior, National action plan for the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism 2019–2023.



In Finland, young people's security challenges include violence and bullying at school as well as discrimination and exclusion. Insecurity is also caused, for example, by financial uncertainty, unemployment or temporary work, and dependence on parents or state support systems. Mental health issues and substance abuse are the most common causes of young people's health problems, social exclusion and long-term inability to work. Suicide is one of the most common causes of death in Finland for young people aged 15–24, especially men. Suicide prevention is an important part of security.<sup>24</sup> The aforementioned problems often disproportionately affect disadvantaged young people and have intergenerational patterns.

The safety of young people will be improved by promoting equality, strengthening the social competence, community spirit and inclusion of young people, and increasing young people's capacity to act in situations of discrimination. The dismantling of discriminatory structures, ways of working and culture is essential. Supporting people who are discriminated against and bullied also plays a key role in preventing exclusion and increasing the participation of young people. School violence and bullying are still significant problems in Finland, even though efforts have been made to eradicate them, for example, through the internationally recognised KiVa School programme. Violence and bullying take place at school, on the Internet and in recreational activities. Young people should also be protected from violence at home. Early intervention in these problems is particularly important.

The prevention of discrimination, violence and bullying can also help prevent radicalisation. Extremist movements often try to recruit marginalised young people by offering them a sense of purpose and community. The highest levels of discrimination, violence and bullying are encountered by young Roma, young people from immigrant backgrounds, young people with disabilities and young people in sexual and gender minorities.<sup>25</sup> Many also experience multiple discrimination, which is a significant threat to safety. In Finland, too, hate speech, violence and gender-based violence are significant security threats for young people.

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24 National Action Plan for Safety Promotion among Children and Youth – Target and Action Plan 2018–2025.

25 National Youth Work and Policy Programme (VANUPO) 2020–2023.



**Image 8.** Young Gambians from a vocational course celebrated their graduation in March 2019. Cooperation between Finland and Gambia's YMCA to promote young people's livelihoods and opportunities for civic engagement supported by Finland's development cooperation funds. Photo: YMCA Finland.

Equal, high-quality education that is based on research is seen as the best safeguard against exclusion and lack of prospects. High-quality education provides young people with tools to combat violent extremism. At the same time, it provides young people with opportunities to promote social cohesion and a peaceful, tolerant, multicultural and interreligious society. Globally, girls and women have poorer opportunities for education than boys and men. In Finland, men are more likely to drop out than women. Education, job opportunities and the related future perspectives are important in preventing radicalisation and crime among young men both in Finland and elsewhere in the world. In Finland, intergenerational transmission of educational attainment continued to decrease for decades, but the positive trend has stalled in recent years. Young people's opportunities are also reduced by gender-based employment segregation. Efforts should be made to break down these barriers so that young people can strive for their dreams regardless of their sex or other characteristics.

The role of global education and education on peace, human rights, democracy and holistic sexual education must be strengthened in education, youth work and education for teachers and youth workers. Proven peace education tools and projects used in Finland should also be disseminated internationally. Media literacy and critical thinking must be promoted in teacher education, schools, youth work and training for authorities. Efforts should be made to combat violence and bullying in schools and educational institutions. Mental health and social skills should be promoted, for example, by strengthening the teaching of emotional and interaction skills. Dialogue among young people with different backgrounds and opinions must also be encouraged.

The economic empowerment of young people also requires special attention. Young people, both in Finland and in fragile circumstances, must be offered opportunities by supporting vocational education and training, employment opportunities and transitions from school to work. Young people's independence can be supported by teaching economic and civic skills. High-quality education, skills and vocational skills that prepare young people for the labour market must be promoted alongside meaningful work placement opportunities and the creation of employment paths. The impacts of digitalisation on education and working life must be taken into account. Employers play an important role in supporting young people's employment outcomes and preventing exclusion. The measures should take into account the gender perspective and pay particular attention to the different needs of young people who are vulnerable due to their characteristics or circumstances, and those from diverse backgrounds.

There are many actors in Finland who are doing valuable work to increase young people's participation and equality, raise awareness, prevent discrimination and organise genuine and open-minded meeting places. NGOs, youth organisations, sports clubs, church groups, mental health and substance abuse workers and various networks play a key role in preventing exclusion and promoting well-being. These types of organisations often also reach groups that are more difficult to reach. It is important to ensure the continuity of these actors' activities and the development of cooperation. Particular attention should be paid to supporting and strengthening the capacity of associations founded by young people from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. The right to recreational activities must be safeguarded for young people from all socio-economic backgrounds. Recreational activities help create empowering experiences of belonging and increase social capital and self-esteem.



**Image 9.** Youth workshop Sininen verstaas, Helsinki. Photo: Elina Manninen/Kuvatoimisto Keksi/Finland Promotion Board.

In preventive action, attention must be paid to the digital environment. Fake news and other harmful materials are disseminated online. Social media and technological advances also offer new platforms and networks through which accurate and fact-based information can be disseminated. Young people's skills and expertise in creating these platforms and disseminating accurate information should be recognised and supported. At the same time, it must be ensured that everyone has equal access to the digital environment and the capacity to act responsibly on its channels. It must also be ensured that digital channels are free from harassment and violence. As the definition of violence has expanded, greater consideration must also be given to online violence and the continuum of online and offline violence.

## OBJECTIVE 2: The role of young people in preventing exclusion and violence and promoting a culture of tolerance and peace has grown

### Target 1: The potential of young people in work to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism has been utilised

#### Measures

National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland recognises young people's positive role and potential in the national programme for the prevention of violent radicalisation and extremism and in its implementation	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland supports young people's participation in work to prevent violent radicalisation and extremism and in its planning and implementation	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs

### Target 2: Quality education as a tool for promoting peace has been emphasised, and the civic mission of schools and youth work organisations has been strengthened

#### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland aims to promote research and education in non-violent action	Ministry of Education and Culture
Finland prevents the spread of misinformation by promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills in teacher education, schools and youth work	Ministry of Education and Culture, NGOs
Finland increases cooperation with schools and NGOs in peace education	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, NGOs

  

National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland strengthens the role of conflict resolution skills and global education (incl. environmental education, environmental mediation, democracy education, human rights education, peace education, dialogue) in education and youth work and in the education of teachers and youth workers	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, NGOs

<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland raises awareness and communicates about the role of high-quality education in the prevention of marginalisation, violence and conflicts	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, NGOs
Finland pays special attention to the role of education in the prevention of sexual harassment	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs

### **Target 3: The economic, professional and social opportunities of young people have been strengthened**

#### **Measures**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland promotes the inclusion of young people in the planning, implementation and monitoring of initiatives relating to young people's economic, professional and social opportunities	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Justice
Finland prevents discrimination in education and the labour market and dismantles structural discrimination	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland supports young people's vocational education, employment opportunities and entrepreneurship by strengthening workplace skills across different educational tiers	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs

<b>International level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland improves young people's educational and economic opportunities in fragile countries	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs



## Target 4: Young people's participation in the promotion of peace and equality has increased, and obstacles have been identified

### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland increases cooperation between the state and young people's civic activities	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Justice
National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland recognises obstacles relating to young people's inclusion in peace work, supports peace-promoting youth organisations and peace networks across different spheres of society	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland develops new channels and mechanisms for young people to promote peace	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland supports dialogue among young people that crosses cultural, religious and party-political divides and collaborates with youth organisations engaged in dialogue-promotion and peace work	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, NGOs
Finland recognises the role of young people as experts in social media and new technologies and encourages them to create new platforms	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of the Interior

## 2.3 Priority area 3: Partnerships

Finland emphasises the importance of diverse partnerships in the implementation of the action plan. Active participation of different types of societal actors and diverse partnerships form the basis of sustainable peace and development. The creation and strengthening of partnerships between different stakeholders is essential not only for preventing violent conflicts and maintaining peace, but also for strengthening democracy and a rules-based multilateral system. Versatile partnerships are Finland's strengths. Finland aims to promote its objectives more effectively through partnerships with various national and international actors. The effective implementation of the 2030 agenda, which involves many different actors in a cross-cutting manner, requires partners and cooperation across different sectors and fields, at both national and international level. At national level, the most important actors and partners are ministries and institutions, the academic community and NGOs, especially youth organisations. Cooperation between actors is also expected to clarify and increase with the monitoring of the national action plan, as the actors meet regularly in the monitoring group.

A change in attitudes and creativity is needed to establish partnerships, and young people in particular must be identified as equal and necessary partners to ensure lasting peace. Meaningful and multisectoral participation of young people creates opportunities to develop new ideas and ways to promote peace and security. In particular, equal cooperation across generations and sectors is considered important. Investing in young people's capacity and leadership, promoting opportunities for participation, exchange of information, support and active listening make young people's participation more impactful. Special attention should be paid to mentoring so that, for example, the know-how of experienced Finnish peace organisations can be made available to young people and youth organisations.

Cooperation and partnerships between public administrative bodies with youth organisations and NGOs working with young people must be strengthened. Investing in young people via organisations that support them is part of building and maintaining peace. Partnerships and cooperation with governments increase the capacity of youth organisations to expand their activities and strengthen their legitimacy. Partnerships are also invaluable for sharing information and experiences.<sup>26</sup> Several Finnish NGOs and their partners contribute to peace and social cohesion both nationally and internationally, including through development cooperation. Finland's development cooperation focuses on strengthening the position and rights of women and girls as well as education and peaceful, democratic societies. Equality must also be taken into account across

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<sup>26</sup> Graeme Simpson et al (2018), Progress Study – The Missing Peace.

all development cooperation activities. Young people should not only be seen as beneficiaries, but should be better consulted on development issues that concern them. For example, young people's diaspora organisations play a special role in fragile countries, as people who live in diaspora tend to have close contacts with their country of origin and good knowledge of local conditions and development needs.

Social media and digital platforms are increasingly used as tools for creating and maintaining national and international networks. They also offer new places for discussion and opportunities for broader participation. Cooperation with informal youth groups and movements is also important. As the youth climate movement has shown, young people do not always need an NGO or other organisation behind them. Cooperation with young people who are not members of movements and organisations is also important in order to ensure pluralism.

Partnership with civil society and young people is also reflected in the integration of youth and the 2250 agenda into Finland's foreign and security policy. Young people also play a key role in the implementation of the 2030 agenda. In 2017, the Youth Agenda2030 group was established under the auspices of the Finnish Committee for Sustainable Development led by the Prime Minister. The main task of the group is to promote the SDGs across Finland. In addition, the group will participate in the planning and implementation of the Agenda2030 objectives with the Committee on Sustainable Development.

Various partnerships are at the core of multilateral cooperation between Finland and the EU. It is essential to strengthen partnerships with countries and regional and international organisations that recognise the positive role of young people in peace and security matters. Important partners in 2250 work include the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the AU. Especially in African countries, the large youth population has a particular interest in the themes of Resolution 2250. This can provide opportunities for new partnerships.

## OBJECTIVE 3: Cooperation with partners and young people who promote peace and have a specific focus on the positive role of young people has increased

### Target 1: The role of young people as key partners in peace work has been strengthened

#### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland promotes strategic cooperation between youth organisations, NGOs and public bodies and ensures young people's inclusion in the planning, implementation and monitoring of Resolution 2250	all
Finland improves young people's opportunities to be heard in questions on sustainable development and other issues that impact them now or in the future	all
Finland strengthens authorities' capacity by organising trainings with NGO partners on the themes of Resolution 2250	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
National and international level	Lead responsibility
Finland supports peace work carried out by youth organisations and movements	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland promotes intergenerational and intersectoral mentoring and sharing of information and experiences about peace and security topics	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs

### Target 2: Support for international and regional partners who recognise the positive role of young people in peace and security matters

#### Measures

International level	Lead responsibility
Finland systematically promotes the 2250 agenda and related goals in dialogue with its partner countries in all relevant contexts	Ministry for Foreign Affairs

International level	Lead responsibility
Finland supports international and national organisations and partners that promote young people's participation in peace and security matters	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
When evaluating mediation projects, Finland takes into account the 2250 dimension of projects and pays special attention in its overall considerations to projects that will advance the Resolution 2250 goals	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland continues to fund positions for Finnish specialists in the UN and its organisations, international financial institutions and research organisations	Ministry for Foreign Affairs



**Image 10.** YMCA Peacemakers is a global youth peace network in which Finnish and Gambian young people discussed their challenges and possible solutions in February 2020. The joint YMCA project is supported by Finland's development cooperation funds. Photo: YMCA Finland.



## 2.4 Priority area 4: Protection

To enable young people to play a meaningful role in building and maintaining sustainable peace, it is necessary to ensure that they have a safe environment in which to live and take action. Safe spaces must be created for young people to gather, express themselves and take part in decision-making. Young people should not only be protected from mental, physical, sexual and gender-based violence, but the realisation of their rights must also be ensured. The human rights perspective must be brought to bear across the board, and the realisation of human rights must be ensured also in emergency situations.

International humanitarian law forms the foundation for the protection of civilians. Young civilians should be protected from violence in fragile and conflict-affected countries. In particular, young people should be protected from sexual and gender-based violence which is used as a weapon of war. One of Finland's priorities in the field of international law is to enforce criminal justice on the most serious international crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Finland will continue to play an active role in the fight against impunity, the development of international criminal law and promoting its enforcement. Finland will continue to support the victims of the most serious international crimes, especially sexual and gender-based violence. Finland must continue to promote the enforcement of the Responsibility to Protect and, in particular, drive preventive action against the most serious international crimes.

Finland is committed to the full implementation of international humanitarian law. One of its key purposes is to protect civilians in armed conflicts. The youth perspective and the special needs of young people must be taken into account in humanitarian activities, and young people must be respected, protected and treated humanely. The rights and status of people with disabilities must be advanced. More work is also needed in the prevention of human trafficking, the identification of victims and tackling crime. Victims of human trafficking must be offered extensive support in order to be able to recover and reintegrate into society.

Young people should be protected not only in fragile and conflict-affected countries but also in Finland. Finland emphasises the importance of recognising the special needs and need for protection of young refugees and displaced people in their countries of origin, in refugee camps, in transit and in countries where they apply for asylum. The perspective and special needs of young people must also be taken into account in reception services for applicants for international protection, in the formal asylum process and in integration. Some refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Finland, especially young women and girls, have experienced sexual violence either in the country of origin or during their escape. They should be offered services intended for victims of sexual offences, taking into account their background and possible cultural obstacles. Services and activities

aimed at young refugees and asylum seekers should also be further developed, taking into account special needs such as possible mental health problems and trauma. Young people entering Finland need social and financial support, educational opportunities and information about their rights. Special attention should be paid to the status of young people with disabilities and young people belonging to sexual and gender minorities. Cooperation with organisations with particular expertise in these areas should be developed and strengthened. Processes for combating racism and identifying structural discrimination must be part of the practices of all organisations.

The work of young peacebuilders and human rights defenders is central to achieving sustainable peace and development. The right to freedom of participation, assembly and expression is a universal human right. Young people advocating for these rights still face human rights violations and threats both in Finland and elsewhere. According to published guidelines for supporting and protecting human rights defenders in Finland (2014), women especially are often in a difficult situation as human rights defenders. Finland must continue its work to support human rights defenders nationally and internationally by raising awareness of the work done by young people and the need for protection. New and existing networks that bring protection for young people should be supported. Networking and partnerships enhance the impact and protection of local human rights advocacy organisations.<sup>27</sup> It is also important to ensure that young politicians, organisational leaders, teachers, journalists and volunteers are protected. Their work must be facilitated and supported.

The long period of peace in Finland often overshadows the fact that young peacebuilders and human rights defenders also experience harassment and receive threats, especially on social media. Social media offers young human rights and peace advocates a platform for sharing information and expressing opinions, but it can also be a platform for discrimination, harassment and hate speech. Hate speech is not only harmful to the target, but also a way to erode the foundation of democratic society and the rule of law<sup>28</sup>. Young women and minoritised people in particular are often subjected to online harassment and hate speech. Hate speech often stems from racist and discriminatory attitudes. The prevention of hate speech must be enhanced through education and training on fundamental and human rights, by increasing interaction skills and media literacy, and by promoting equality. Hate speech can also be addressed by legal means and within legal frameworks such as the Non-Discrimination Act and the Equality Act. Training for

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27 The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Finnish Foreign Service's public guidelines on the practical implementation of the EU guidelines on human rights defenders.

28 Ministry of the Interior, Words Are Actions: More Efficient Measures against Hate Speech and Cyberbullying.

authorities and legislators on hate speech and freedom of expression and its limits must also be increased. At national level, one of the main building blocks of protection is to prevent and intervene in violence and bullying at school.

Sexual harassment and violence are encountered especially by girls and women, sexual and gender minorities and racial minorities. Boys and men can also be victims of sexual violence. A high number of victims of rape in Finland are under the age of 30. It is estimated that only a small proportion of rape cases are reported and even fewer lead to a conviction. The capacity of the authorities should be developed so that the victims receive the best possible support through the difficult legal process. It is important to lower the threshold for reporting sexual offences.

## **OBJECTIVE 4: The protection of young people and the realisation of their rights in conflicts and conflict prevention have been strengthened**

### **Target 1: Compliance with the obligations of humanitarian and international criminal law has been strengthened**

#### **Measures**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland promotes awareness among young people of the key principles of humanitarian law and international criminal law	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence
<b>International level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland promotes compliance with humanitarian law and accountability for serious international crimes	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland continues to support victims of serious international crime, especially victims of sexual and gender-based violence	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland communicates and acts consistently in all relevant for a relating to obligations under international law	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland promotes the Responsibility to Protect (R2P <sup>29</sup> ), its implementation and preventive measures	Ministry for Foreign Affairs

<sup>29</sup> Responsibility to Protect refers to the political commitment aimed at preventing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, which was adopted in 2005 by the UN General Assembly.

## Target 2: The protection of young people and consideration of special needs in humanitarian aid activities and migration response measures have been strengthened

### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland continues to promote the ability of actors involved in the reception, asylum process and integration of asylum seekers to consider the special needs of young people in their work	Ministry of the Interior
Finland promotes victim support services for young asylum seekers and refugees who are victims of crime, paying special attention to the support needs of victims of sexual crimes	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
International level	Lead responsibility
Finland works in humanitarian fora highlighting the need for special attention to young people with disabilities, and girls' and young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and the right to inclusive education in emergency situations, and works to remove obstacles to accessing help	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
In conflict areas, Finland provides support for girls and young women, e.g. safe houses, legal aid and education	NGOs

## Target 3: The protection and realisation of the rights of young peacebuilders, human rights defenders and activists have strengthened

### Measures

National level	Lead responsibility
Finland recognises the role of young people in national guidelines and reports concerning human rights defenders	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland will increase education for officials and legislators on hate speech and freedom of speech and its limits	Ministry of the Interior
Finland raises awareness of the available legal remedies for victims of hate speech	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, NGOs

<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland raises awareness of young human rights defenders', peacebuilders' and activists' work, rights and need for protection	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland pays special attention to the safety and accessibility of events aimed at young people	all

#### **Target 4: The protection of young people and the prevention of their exclusion have been strengthened nationally**

##### **Measures**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland increases efforts to combat school violence and bullying and increases support available to victims	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, NGOs
Finland strengthens the prevention of racism and discrimination	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, NGOs
Finland increases efforts to combat sexual crime and harassment and pays special attention to making reporting easier and to supporting victims	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, NGOs
Finland promotes the authorities' ability to identify and intervene in human trafficking and supports victims in recovery	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment





**Image 11.** Young rape survivors from the DRC who have set up an action group. Photo from refugee settlements in Uganda. Photo: Finnish Refugee Council/Jenni Hamara.



## 2.5 Priority area 5: Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration

Lasting peace also requires post-conflict measures. Post-conflict stabilisation requires the disarmament of the parties and their reintegration into society. Young people and their specific needs must be given special attention in post-conflict actions, both nationally and internationally, and they should be involved in the planning and implementation of programmes. At national level, the objectives and actions in this priority area also address reintegration and adjustment following deradicalisation, release from prison or youth detention centre or recovery from social marginalisation.

Although a large proportion of former combatants around the world are young people, little attention has been paid to the role, views and special needs of young people in DDR (disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration) activities. Finland operates in DDR activities through multilateral cooperation and also by supporting various NGOs. Support for international DDR activities that take into account the specific needs of young people, and especially young women, must be strengthened. In addition, the inclusiveness of the processes should be enhanced, and local young people should be involved in the planning and implementation of DDR processes. Awareness of young people's role in post-conflict disarmament and non-proliferation must be increased. DDR activities must be brought closer to young people through training and by raising awareness of this theme.

Ensuring young people's access to education and work opportunities is an essential part of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. In fragile countries, Finland focuses on the employment of women and young people, supporting the livelihoods of returning refugees and former soldiers and their reintegration into their communities. In addition, attention will be paid to entrepreneurship and supporting states in their efforts to benefit from trade and investment, including through development cooperation that supports trade. Finland also supports those returning from conflict areas in Finland. In national measures to support integration, the specific needs of young people must be taken into account in education, training, civic participation, social inclusion, employment and health promotion. The psychosocial needs of young people must also be taken into account. The expertise and peer support of young people with an immigrant, refugee or diaspora background must be recognised. Young people arriving in Finland should be seen as active individuals and assets to society.

Opportunities must be improved for young people to reintegrate into society to find employment, become entrepreneurs and participate in the economy. Education and employment opportunities play an important role in the efforts to prevent exclusion and promote a culture of peace. It is important to take into account the special needs of young people and improve their pathways to education and work. The physical and

psychological recovery of returnees and their social integration should be supported. They must have access to high-quality education, socio-economic support and skills development in e.g. vocational training. Finnish organisations have high-quality expertise in working with child soldiers, for example. Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration measures must also be gender sensitive and inclusive. In addition, families of young returnees must be supported during the DDR process.

## **OBJECTIVE 5: The special needs of young people in post-conflict measures are taken into account, and their positive role has been strengthened**

**Target 1: The special needs of young people have been taken into account in support measures for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration**

### **Measures**

<b>National level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland supports young people's participation in the planning and implementation of reintegration measures	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Finland produces and promotes research in work involving people returning from war zones	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
Finland increases partnerships with the private sector to increase youth employment	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
Finland supports young returnees in psychological and physical recovery	Ministry of the Interior
<b>National and international level</b>	<b>Lead responsibility</b>
Finland supports young people's skills and professional competencies to better match labour market expectations	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, NGOs
Finland supports youth and peace organisations as partners in youth employment and entrepreneurship	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

## Target 2: The role of young people in DDR activities has been strengthened

### Measures

#### National level

#### Lead responsibility

Finland raises awareness of DDR among young people

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#### International level

#### Lead responsibility

Finland promotes the youth perspective in DDR processes and young people's participation in their planning and implementation

Ministry for Foreign Affairs



**Image 12.** The first international symposium on the positive role of young people in peace processes, 5–6 March 2019. Photo: Nikke Puskala.

### 3 Implementation and monitoring of the action plan

The ministries, research institutes and civil and youth organisations mentioned in the action plan participate in the plan's implementation and monitoring. The 2250 network of NGOs plays an important role in the plan's monitoring and evaluation, as the participation of young people in this activity is also integral.

In addition to its own activities and areas of responsibility, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs coordinates the plan's implementation. The implementation of the action plan is monitored and evaluated by the 2250 National Monitoring Group, which includes the parties mentioned above. The group meets 3–4 times a year. The group's work also promotes cooperation around the 2250 themes, as it enables the actors to share best practices and get new ideas for their activities.

The parties involved in the implementation will report to the National Monitoring Group on their own progress in the implementation of Resolution 2250. Evaluation reports on the outcomes of the plan's implementation will be drawn up at the mid-point and end of the programme period. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs prepares a summary report based on the reporting of the parties involved in the implementation and the work of the monitoring group. The evaluation reports will be submitted to Parliament and presented to the Foreign Affairs Committee. The responsible parties are encouraged to prepare sector- and actor-specific annual plans to promote the implementation of the action plan. Finland will also respond to reporting requests from international organisations regarding the implementation of Resolution 2250.

In general and project-specific government aid, the ministries and other parties will aim to take special note of work that connects to the Youth, Peace and Security theme. The parties responsible for the implementation should engage young people in a concrete, systematic and planned manner.

Indicators will be developed to support the monitoring of the implementation. A working group has been set up to develop the indicators. The indicators will serve as tools for evaluating the implementation and measuring the results. The indicators take into account the intersectional perspective. They will also be used to assess equality outcomes in 2250 measures.

## 4 Acronyms

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration
GCYPS	Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security
PBC	UN Peacebuilding Commission
PBSO	UN Peacebuilding Support Office
SfCG	Search for Common Ground
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOY	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
UNSC	UNSC United Nations Security Council
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security



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