



Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme

Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

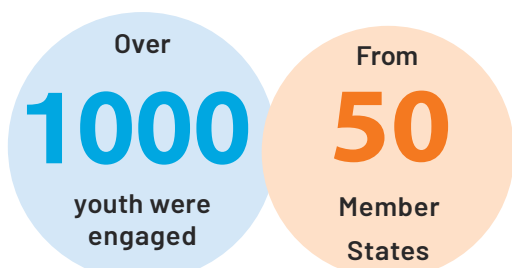
The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism/ Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNOCT/UNCCT) Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme (YEEP), part of the Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), seeks to empower and enable young people to contribute meaningfully in global, regional and national efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism. The Global Programme on PCVE aims to scale up initiatives that support and promote the positive role young people play in PCVE-efforts, and connect actors on the local, regional, and international levels for improved cooperation in the fight against terrorism. YEEP empowers young leaders to achieve their full potential as individuals, and in the CT/PCVE space by recognizing their value and contributions as agents of change.

Background

In 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted a landmark resolution, Security Council resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, urging Member States to amplify the voice of youth in decision-making and to participate meaningfully and comprehensively in peace processes. It was the first time that the Security Council formally recognized the need to prioritise youth participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, and disengagement and reintegration. The United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030: Working With and For Youth, is a clear message that young people are one of our strongest partners to address global challenges, without which the youth strategy 2030 cannot be achieved.

Why engaging young people is important?

Valuable partners	Young people have an important and powerful role to play in shaping CT/PCVE policies and approaches. Their proximity to the problems we are seeking to address mean they possess valuable information and insight in the fight against terrorism.
Target for Recruitment	Young people are disproportionately affected by violent extremism. They are often the target for recruitment and radicalisation by violent extremist and terrorist organisations.
Agile and connected	Young people are generally much better positioned to engage and promote a culture of tolerance and peace amongst their peers and possess a talent for communication and mobilisation.
Passionate	Most young people recognize PCVE as a priority in their contexts and many have already acted to reduce the impact of violent extremism, promote tolerance and value pluralism, and build resilience in their local communities and societies.



YEEP Programmatic Activities

YEEP can be delivered flexibly according to a range of contexts and needs. It is a hybrid model providing both virtual and in person capacity building. Youth participants complete a series of training modules on our eLearning platform, complimented by facilitator-led workshops and mentoring sessions. The programme activities are divided in three phases:

PHASE ONE CAPACITY BUILDING

YEEP participants receive comprehensive training by a range of local and global PCVE experts and acquire new skills and knowledge in:

- PCVE
- YPS Agenda
- Policy-making
- Facilitation and managing difficult conversations
- Self-care
- Leadership
- Peer workshop planning



PHASE THREE YEEP POLICY DIALOGUE

Participants are supported to develop policy pitches through communications and advocacy training. YEEP participants then present their pitches to key decision-makers (govt representatives, UN agencies, CSOs, regional organisations and others) and engage in a dialogue about how the recommendations can be actioned.

PHASE TWO PEER ENGAGEMENT

YEEP participants use their newfound skills to organise and facilitate dialogue workshops to listen to their peers on their priorities in relation to violent extremism.

This step is followed by a coproduction stage where YEEP participants analyse the findings from the workshops to formulate policy recommendations.



JUN 2020
Launch of
YEEP

AUG 2020
YEEP Sudan
commences

APR 2020

Formation of the Global Youth Reference Group: 10 young leaders invited to co-create content for the YEEP Pilot

JUL 2020
YEEP Sweden
and Australia
commences

DEC 2020
Sweden End Event
and Policy Dialogue

2020 - 2021 YEEP PILOT

35

young leaders received training & coaching

19

peer-to-peer workshops in Sudan, Sweden & Australia

263

peers reached by youth leaders

2022 REGIONAL YEEP

22

young leaders received training & coaching

36

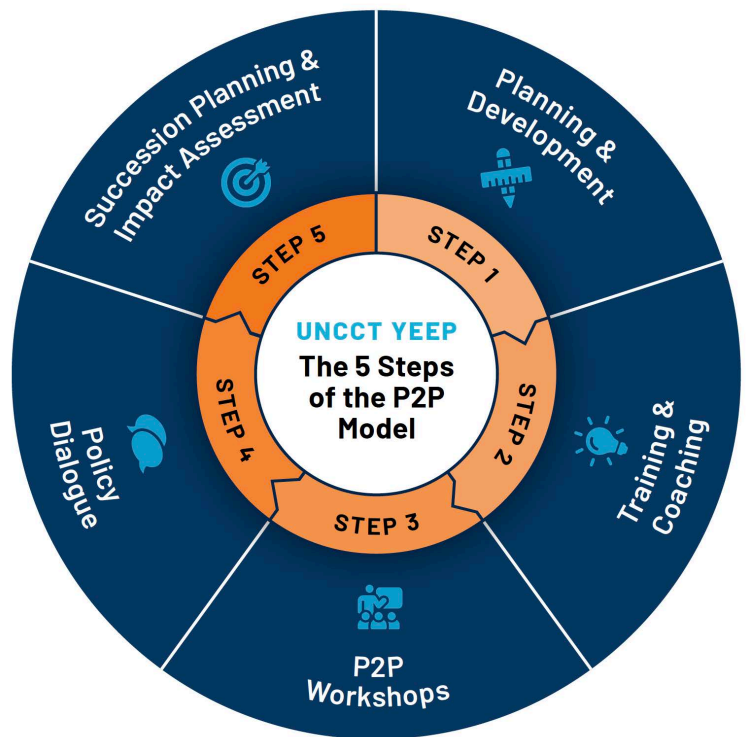
peer-to-peer workshops in South & Southeast Asia

170

peers reached by youth leaders

The UNCCT Peer to Peer Model (P2P Model) of Youth Engagement offers an alternative to traditional top-down consultation methods, which can sometimes breed distrust between young people and government and other institutions, particularly in the field of PCVE. Instead, the model offers an approach that seeks to engage marginalised and excluded youth, understand young people’s realities and priorities in a youth-centred and informed way, and support young people to develop the skills and a sense of agency to advocate for themselves in policy-making processes.

The P2P Model is an approach developed and validated through piloting the YEEP with young people in three Member States, and a peer review process with 22 practitioners in PCVE, mental health, peacebuilding and youth work.



“YEEP was a fruitful youth programme that allowed me to take back a lot of good and valuable lessons with me...leadership, confidence, critical thinking, and accountability. I am able to implement leadership qualities at my workplace through discussions and presentations to high [level] officials about PCVE-related issues and existing practices. My [new] critical thinking skills [have] made me a good decision-maker during necessary situations, mostly at my workplace.” YEEP participant



Who does the programme engage?

YEEP participants are aged between 16-29 years and are selected to ensure a diverse range of gender, ethnicity, religious/sectarian, urban/rural and socio-economic and educational backgrounds, with a view to include 'hard to reach' young people and those directly affected by terrorism.

Trainers are generally youth engagement experts with experience in training and PCVE, with global and/or local expertise.

UN Agencies, local CSO and youth organisations and government stakeholders support the implementation of YEEP on the ground and are important contributors to the policy dialogue.

Private sector actors are also engaged as experts and guest speakers to support training (e.g., social media, educators, community and religious leaders, and mental health professionals).

Evaluations conducted on YEEP and feedback gathered on participants' experiences of the Programme show strong results. Young leaders reported an uplift in their capacity to engage with their peers on sensitive topics such as PCVE, and to formulate and communicate policy recommendations to key decision makers. When asked to reflect on the policy dialogue itself, 100% of young leaders agreed they were able to share their recommendations and 87% agreed they felt listened to by the policy makers who were present. As noted by one of the young leaders:

"I love how YEEP provided a safe space where I [could] learn, share, and advocate about something that I am passionate about and belong to. [I went] from...not knowing anything about PCVE to wanting to fight and speak up for my community." - YEEP Participant

YEEP Africa 2023-24

UNOCT/UNCCT in partnership with Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), and through the generous support of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF), will be launching YEEP Africa to be rolled out in three African Member States. YEEP Africa seeks to increase the resilience of young people against violent extremism and recruitment into terrorist groups, by increasing their awareness of violent extremism trends and vulnerabilities, their cognitive complexity, and by empowering them to rise as leaders within their own communities.

UNOCT/UNCCT will work with partners on the ground in each of the African Member States, to deliver a locally tailored version of YEEP nationally, culminating in a regional summit in 2024, which will bring together all stakeholders to share experiences and lessons learned, and seek opportunities for regional collaboration.

