International Youth Day 2018
Safe Spaces for Youth
Informational Packet

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UN DESA/DISD Programme on Youth & UN-Habitat
2018 International Youth Day

The 2018 International Youth Day will aim to promote youth engagement and empowerment by exploring the role of safe spaces in contributing to freedom of expression, mutual respect and constructive dialogue.

The event will reflect on the significance of safe spaces in providing opportunities for sport, innovation, empowerment and leisure time activities, while deconstructing barriers of judgment, hate speech, harassment or violence.

Overall, participants will consider ways in which safe spaces can promote an inclusive youth development towards the 2030 Agenda.
What are Safe Spaces for Youth?

Safe Spaces can be defined as platforms where youth can **come together, freely express themselves, engage in activities** related to their diverse needs and interests and **participate in decision-making processes**.

**Available and accessible** physical or virtual spaces can help youth feel valued and advance their **cognitive, emotional and social** skills as they transition into adulthood.
Having a space that feels safe can empower both rural and urban youth by providing them with the opportunity to gather and participate in diverse activities or to talk and engage in meaningful dialogues.

The rise of social media and other forms of online communication has helped youth explore new opportunities for engagement and use their innovations to further create virtual and physical safe spaces.
Youth-led and youth focused organizations can utilize safe spaces to meaningfully engage with local, national and global decision makers on various issues, including youth civil rights, voting, volunteering, democracy and governance based on the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
Research indicates that the availability and accessibility of public spaces to youth such as parks, sporting facilities, cafés and community gardens can deter them from behavior which negatively impacts their development.
Open digital spaces can provide youth the ability to instantly interact with each other on topics ranging from pop culture, religion and politics irrespective of their age, race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, geographical location or time differences. Sometimes these lead to tangible global online campaigns and virtual mobilizations.
Physical Spaces

Ensuring that physical spaces appeal to youth from diverse backgrounds, the planning of such spaces should be inclusive and accommodate their various needs, interests and activities. The physical space should be designed in a way to deter gender-based violence, harassment or marginalization.
International Frameworks

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and targets (iii) and (vii) provide a strong basis for safe urban spaces towards inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

Furthermore, a youth inclusive urbanization is articulated in the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Recently the United Nations hosted a forum in Asia, the region with the largest number of youth, to stress the importance of providing inclusive safe spaces to fulfil the needs of young people, as well as for them to be partners, leaders and innovators to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Join the global community and create safe spaces for youth! #SafeSpaces4Youth

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