

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: SHAPING THE FIRST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

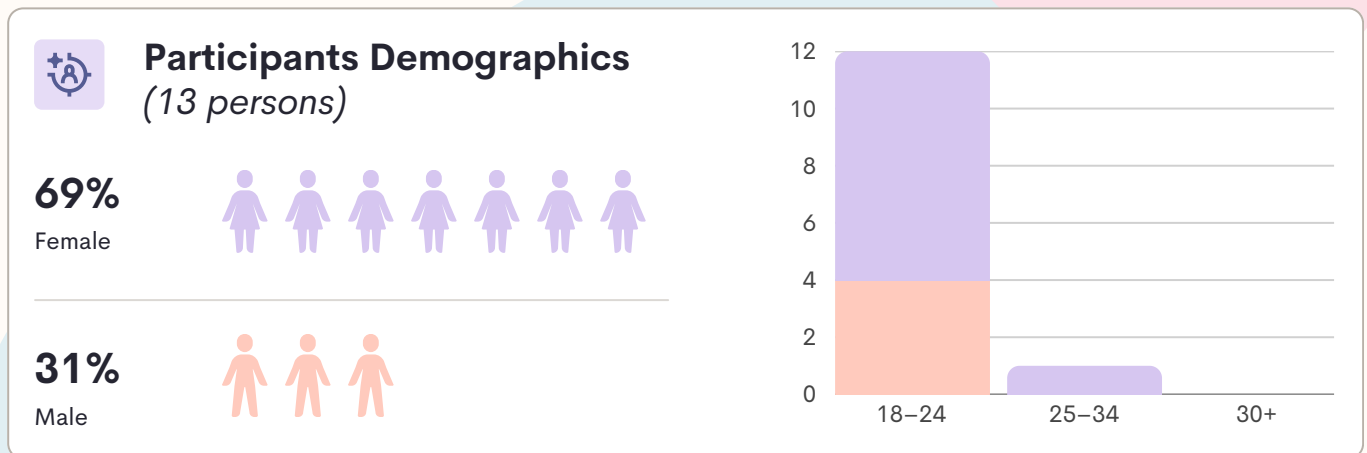
Youth Shaping WPS Agenda – in-person consultation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 28 May 2025

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Tajikistan has built a structured national framework on youth, anchored in the Law on **Youth and State Youth Policy** (2021) and the **State Youth Policy Strategy 2021–2030**, focusing on employment, civic engagement, health, and prevention of

extremism. The Committee on Youth and Sports Affairs oversees implementation through youth centers and regional programs promoting participation and entrepreneurship. Tajikistan adopted its first **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** (2014–2017), emphasizing women’s participation and protection, and continues to engage in WPS and YPS dialogues through UN Women, OSCE, and civil society, including youth-led peace initiatives and mental-health projects that link social inclusion with community resilience.



Prior to the consultation, the level of awareness of the WPS and YPS agendas among participants varied: **8% reported being well-familiar, 15% were somewhat familiar, 31% had only heard of it but were not familiar, and 46% were not familiar at all.**

The group represented a diverse range of backgrounds, with the majority coming from youth groups/ NGOs, volunteer networks, and CSOs, including Y-PEER Tajikistan, and CAY4W. A significant proportion were students and graduates from universities such as the Tajik National University and the Russian-Tajik Slavonic University, while others represented Afghan refugee youth communities, media and communications, and independent young professionals active in community service.

MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED



Limited awareness of WPS/YPS among youth and absence of youth-friendly materials in Tajik or Russian.



Mental-health stress and trauma post-COVID and from daily socio-economic pressures; stigma around seeking help.



Economic hardship and unemployment as quiet drivers of frustration and social tension.



Peer pressure and rising substance use among youth due to lack of safe recreational spaces.



Digital misinformation and social-media misuse, fostering polarization and radicalization risks.





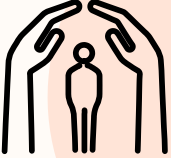

Social exclusion and discrimination, particularly toward Afghan refugee youth and rural young women.

MAIN PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

- **Mental and physical health and psychosocial support:** promoting youth-friendly (mental) health services, peer-support groups, and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and stress among young people.
- **Gender equality and GBV prevention:** expanding survivor-centered services, strengthening legal protection, and launching education campaigns on gender norms, safety, and respect.
- **Countering misinformation and radicalization:** enhancing digital literacy, critical thinking, and youth-led awareness campaigns to challenge online hate, extremist narratives, and disinformation.
- **Peace and civic education:** integrating conflict resolution, tolerance, and media literacy into school and university programs; establishing youth debate clubs and dialogue spaces.
- **Inclusion of marginalized and refugee youth:** enabling Afghan and rural youth to access education, employment, and civic programs; promoting anti-discrimination and equal participation.
- **Economic empowerment for peace:** linking peacebuilding with youth entrepreneurship, vocational training, and job creation, especially in rural and border districts.

**WOMEN LEAD.
PEACE FOLLOWS.**

SOLUTIONS

<p>1. Participation</p> 	<p>2. Prevention</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Local Youth Peace Councils under municipalities to co-design community projects, ensure gender parity, and report directly to local authorities. • Introduce Youth Liaison Officers in key ministries (Education, Youth & Sports, Internal Affairs) to institutionalize youth feedback. • Organize National Youth Forums on Peace & Security regularly throughout the year with thematic workshops and policy simulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate Peace and Civic Values education into national curricula (conflict resolution, gender equality, media literacy). • Form Youth Prevention Teams mapping local tensions and facilitating intergenerational dialogues. • Establish Community Mediation Hubs in schools, youth centers, and mahallas. • Introduce Cross-Border Youth Peace Fellowship across Central Asia, including Afghan and stateless youth.
<p>3. Protection</p> 	<p>4. Relief & Recovery</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a National Youth Protection Charter ensuring equal rights, non-discrimination, and legal protection for displaced youth. • Expand school-based safe zones with trained counselors and anonymous reporting boxes. • Establish mobile outreach clinics providing psychosocial and legal aid to Afghan youth communities. • Run anti-discrimination campaigns under the banner “Young. Safe. Equal.” • Engage refugee youth in protection monitoring and legal-literacy training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Restart Hubs - local centers offering trauma counseling, life-skills, and reintegration support. • Support peer mentorship programs pairing Afghan and Tajik youth in community service projects. • Establish mobile reintegration teams delivering services to remote districts. • Promote youth-led storytelling and art therapy initiatives as psychosocial healing tools.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS (YEAR 1 OF RAP WPS)

- Pilot **Youth Peace Councils** in Dushanbe and Khatlon to model participatory governance.
- Roll out **“Peace Starts with Us” multimedia campaign** in Tajik and Dari targeting schools and online audiences.
- Establish **refugee-inclusive youth safe-spaces** offering counseling and legal clinics.
- Conduct **Training-of-Trainers for youth mediators** and launch school peace clubs.
- Hold a **National Youth Forum on Mental Health and Peace** (MoYS & UN).
- Implement small “Startup for Peace” **micro-grants** (USD 500–1 000) for **youth peace initiatives**.



Photo from the in-person Consultation

LONG TERM ACTIONS (2–3 YEARS OF RAP WPS)

- **Institutionalize Local Youth Peace Councils** nationwide through a government decree.
- **Integrate Peace & Civic Values** modules into national secondary-education curricula.
- **Create a Youth Peace & Security Fund** supporting youth-led research and projects.
- **Establish Youth–Media Alliances** producing stories of resilience and interethnic cooperation.
- **Form a National Youth Observatory** to monitor participation, protection, and peace indicators.
- **Embed mental-health and psychosocial support** within youth employment and education programs.

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