

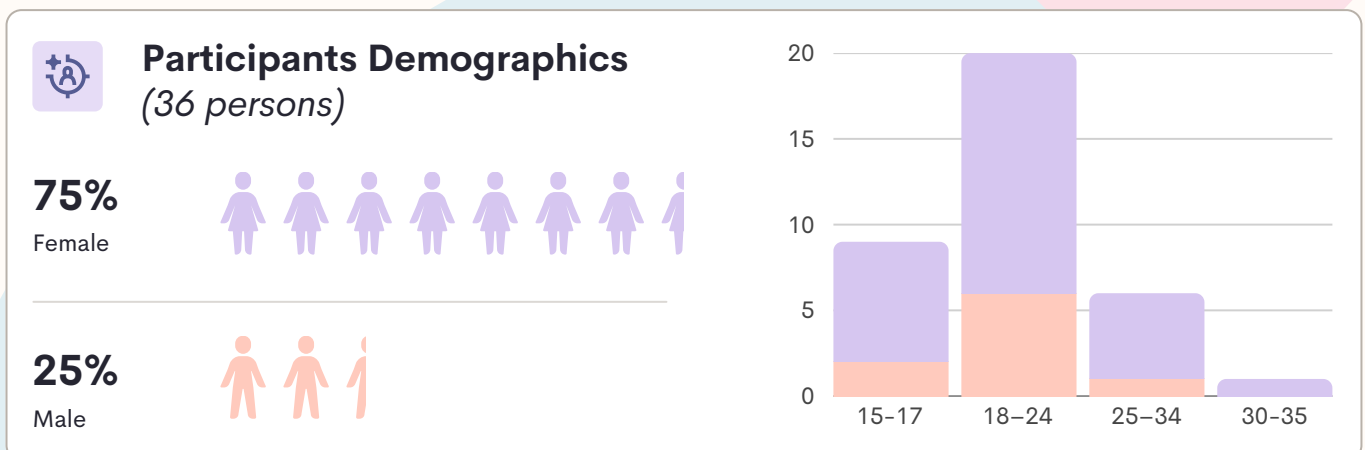
# BUILDING THE FOUNDATION: SHAPING THE FIRST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

## *Youth Shaping WPS Agenda – virtual consultation in Turkmenistan, 30 July 2025*

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Turkmenistan has an expansive, state-led youth policy architecture anchored in the **Law on State Youth Policy** (2013; revised 2017 & 2022), which now defines youth as ages **14–35** and introduces new measures (e.g., support for “youth enterprises,” tax preferences, and student deferments). Implementation is guided by the **State Programme on Youth Policy 2021–2025** and the **Strategy for International Youth Cooperation to 2030**. The Ministry of Education leads coordination, while the Magtymguly Youth Organization functions as a mass youth mobilizer. Demographically, Turkmenistan has a pronounced youth cohort (**around 30–40% under 30**), underscoring the strategic importance of youth programming. Regionally, Turkmenistan has taken visible steps to amplify youth voices in peace and security—convening the first **Central Asian Youth Forum on Peace and Security** (Arkadag, Oct 2023) and a second meeting at UN Headquarters (Apr 2025) to mark the 10th anniversary of **UNSCR 2250**.



Prior to the consultation, awareness of the WPS agenda among participants was uneven: **11% reported being well-familiar** with it, **27.8% were somewhat familiar**, **nearly half (47.2%) had only heard of it** but were not familiar, and **13.9% indicated they were not familiar at all**.

The participant group reflected a broad cross-section of Turkmen youth: the majority were students at secondary schools and universities, alongside members of youth and volunteer networks such as the Red Crescent, American Center/Technovation, and local youth clubs. A notable share were engaged in youth advisory boards of international entities (including the EU, UNODC RYNCA, and UNICEF), while others represented civic associations or joined as independent young professionals and educators.

# MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED



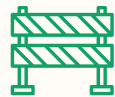
**Limited, uneven awareness of the WPS agenda** among youth; need for clear, youth-friendly information and terminology in Turkmen, Russian, and English. (Awareness distribution above.)



**Limited continuity and follow-up:** young people highlighted that events or consultations on WPS/YPS often feel “one-off,” without clear mechanisms to sustain engagement or implement the ideas they propose.



**Digital access and connectivity constraints** that hinder inclusive participation in national/provincial initiatives.



**Gender and socio-cultural norms** that can narrow opportunities for girls and young women in STEM fields.







**Inclusion gaps for young people with disabilities** and those outside major cities; need for accessible formats, services, and spaces.

# MAIN PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

- **Make WPS relatable and practical for youth** through school/university modules, clubs, and campaigns that connect WPS with everyday safety, respect, and equality.
- **Institutionalize meaningful youth participation** (regular dialogue platforms; youth seats in consultative bodies; transparent micro-grants for youth-led projects).
- **Promote inclusion and accessibility** (disability-inclusive education and events; psychosocial support; digital safety).
- **Strengthen volunteerism for community resilience** (leveraging existing networks like the Red Crescent and youth centers).
- **Digital and media literacy for peace:** participants emphasized the importance of strengthening youth skills to identify misinformation and counter harmful narratives online.
- **Regional cooperation among youth:** calls were made for exchange programmes and cross-border youth projects in Central Asia to share experiences and scale good practices on WPS.


**WOMEN LEAD.  
PEACE FOLLOWS.**

# SOLUTIONS

<p><b>1. Participation</b></p> 	<p><b>2. Prevention</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create youth leadership programs for girls and young women</b> in provincial centers (mentorship, public speaking, advocacy).</li> <li>• <b>Institutionalize youth consultation days at national and provincial levels</b>, where ministries and local authorities meet quarterly with youth groups to collect proposals and provide feedback on implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Integrate peace education / WPS &amp; YPS basics</b>, human rights, media &amp; digital literacy, and non-violent communication into school and university co-curricula; seed WPS clubs with debate/dialogue formats.</li> <li>• <b>Run community dialogue sessions in velayats</b> (with elders, teachers, youth leaders) focused on equality, respect, and countering harmful stereotypes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Protection</b></p> 	<p><b>4. Relief &amp; Recovery</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Map and promote confidential referral pathways</b> (legal, psychosocial, and digital-safety support) for girls/young women and youth activists; ensure accessibility.</li> <li>• <b>Digital safety and cyber-protection hubs</b> to support young women and activists facing online harassment, with confidential reporting and referral to support services.</li> <li>• <b>Community-based safe spaces</b> (in schools, youth centers, or libraries) where girls and young women can access psychosocial help, legal advice, and mentorship without stigma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Form a Youth Volunteer Corps for Resilience</b> (disaster preparedness, health promotion, inclusive community support), building on existing volunteer infrastructure (e.g., Red Crescent youth).</li> <li>• <b>Youth-led psychosocial support initiatives</b> (peer counseling, art therapy, sport-for-recovery projects) for communities affected by trauma or disasters.</li> </ul>

## SHORT TERM ACTIONS (YEAR 1 OF RAP WPS)

- **Peer-to-peer education networks:** train youth ambassadors to deliver WPS sessions in schools and communities in local languages.
- **Community peace labs:** small youth-led groups in velayats to test innovative approaches to conflict prevention (dialogue circles, art and sports for peace).
- **Digital campaign “Youth Voices for Peace”:** short videos and podcasts produced by young people to explain WPS in relatable ways.
- **Youth hackathons for social good:** one-day innovation events where youth teams design practical solutions for community safety and inclusion.
- **Inclusive participation fund:** quick-response micro-grants to ensure participation of youth with disabilities or from rural areas in WPS-related events.



Wordcloud of “definitions” of peace by participants

ВЗАИМОПОМОЩЬ  
свобода  
уважение права мир  
СПОКОЙСТВИЕ  
равноправие  
равенство  
безопасность  
дружба  
ВЗАИМОПОНИМАНИЕ

*Wordcloud of “definitions” of peace by participants*

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

- **Integration of WPS into teacher training curricula:** ensure that future educators are systematically trained in peace education and gender equality.
- **Establishment of youth WPS fellowships:** annual programme placing young women and men in ministries, NGOs, or regional bodies to gain hands-on experience.
- **Regional youth observatory on WPS:** platform to track youth participation, document good practices, and publish annual reports with cross-country data.
- **Youth innovation fund for resilience:** structured financing mechanism for scaling successful youth-led pilot projects nationally and regionally.
- **Partnership with private sector:** encourage companies to support youth-led initiatives through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, internships, and mentoring linked to peace and equality goals.

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PEACE FOLLOWS.**