

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

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

Facilitator: Shukurgeldi Myradov, UN Women Consultant on Youth Engagement



Uzbekistan has built an extensive youth policy architecture in recent years. The 2016 Law **“On State Youth Policy”** (amended in 2017&2022) defines youth rights and establishes the Agency for Youth Affairs as the specially authorized public

body to coordinate policy across sectors. The national agenda is guided by the **Concept and Roadmap on State Youth Policy** (to 2025) and a newer **Strategy**, with a focus on youth, both aligning youth development with the SDGs and emphasizing education, employment, civic engagement, and gender equality. Mechanisms for participation include **Youth Parliaments** under both chambers of the Oliy Majlis, regional Youth Councils/Kengashes, and youth leaders at mahalla level (“mahalla seven”). Flagship programs support entrepreneurship and inclusion, notably *“Yoshlar – Kelajagimiz”* for youth startups, the nationwide Five Important Initiatives on arts/sport/IT/reading/women’s employment, and the *“Yoshlar daftari”* (Youth Book) system that identifies and assists vulnerable youth.



### Participants Demographics (27 persons)

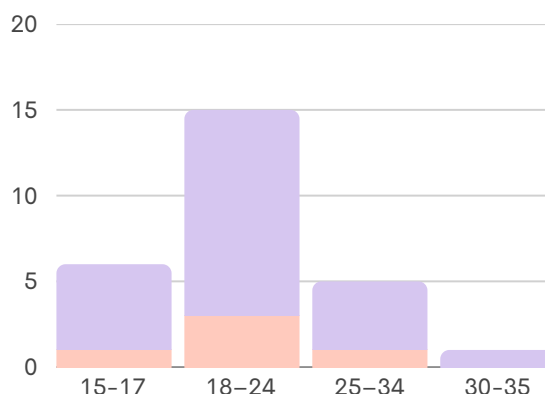
**81,5%**

Female



**18,5%**

Male



Awareness of WPS prior to the consultation: **well-familiar**—6 (≈22%); **somewhat familiar**—9 (≈33%); **heard of but not familiar**—10 (≈37%); **not familiar**—2 (≈7%).

Background/affiliation (indicative mix): predominately youth NGOs and networks (e.g., EU Youth Sounding Board, HeForShe/UN Women-linked initiatives, local civic groups), a large student/academic share (state & international universities), and young professionals from international organizations and public institutions (e.g., UNICEF/UNFPA-linked projects, UNODC RYNCA, climate and public health agencies). Participants also included specialists in cybersecurity/tech, public health (incl. maternal and infant health in the Aral Sea region), and migration/reintegration work—experience that shaped the discussion.

# MAIN CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED



**Persisting GBV and social tolerance of harassment** (online/offline), with barriers to reporting and survivor-centered services.



**Digital safety risks** (doxxing, cyber-bullying, disinformation) especially for young women activists and creators.



**Uneven access to meaningful participation**—youth invited to events, but limited decision-shaping roles and feedback loops.



**Rural-urban and regional disparities** (e.g., Karakalpakstan/Aral Sea area) in services, jobs, and civic spaces for young women.



**Stereotypes deterring girls' participation in STEM** and public life; limited role models.







**Climate and environmental stressors** (water/air quality, drought) exacerbating health and livelihood insecurities for youth and women.

# MAIN PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

- **Institutionalize youth seats** and co-design roles in WPS processes at national and regional levels.
- **Scale survivor-centered GBV prevention** and response (hotlines, legal aid, shelters, trauma-informed services).
- **Build digital safety & cyber-resilience skills** for girls/young women, journalists, and activists; establish rapid-response pathways with platforms.
- **Expand peace education**, mediation, and dialogue clubs in schools/universities/mahallas.
- **Target under-served regions** (e.g., Aral area) with combined livelihood, mental health, and civic engagement packages.
- **Provide predictable small-grants windows for youth-led WPS** micro-projects; simplify access.
- **Mainstream gender and WPS** in national youth programs and Youth Parliaments.

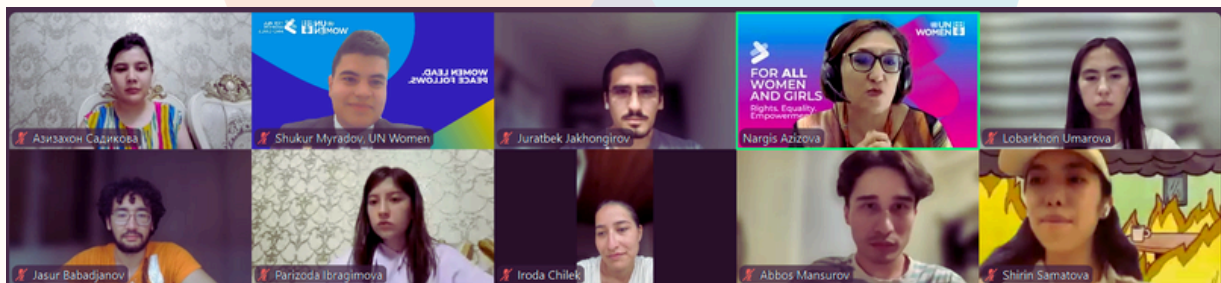
**WOMEN LEAD.  
PEACE FOLLOWS.**

# SOLUTIONS

<p><b>1. Participation</b></p> 	<p><b>2. Prevention</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a <b>Youth–WPS Advisory Panel</b> to the national WPS coordination mechanism (seats for diverse regions, disability inclusion, and returnee youth).</li> <li>• Introduce <b>youth observers</b> to relevant parliamentary committees (defense, internal affairs, gender) with structured feedback loops.</li> <li>• Create a <b>Regional Youth Peace Fellows</b> program (CA-wide) pairing fellows with UN agencies/ministries to co-draft RAP actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate <b>peace education, media literacy, and bystander training</b> into school/university curricula and mahalla youth clubs.</li> <li>• Support <b>girls in STEM &amp; climate security labs</b> (e.g., air/water monitoring, early-warning awareness) to link science and WPS.</li> <li>• Back <b>youth-led dialogue platforms</b> addressing stigma toward returnee families, migrants, and minorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Protection</b></p> 	<p><b>4. Relief &amp; Recovery</b></p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out <b>digital protection protocols</b> for activists (hotlines, incident reporting, safe-device kits, pro-bono legal support).</li> <li>• Standardize <b>campus/workplace anti-harassment codes</b> with accountability and peer advocates.</li> <li>• Expand <b>trauma-informed, youth-friendly GBV services</b>, including mobile teams in rural areas.</li> <li>• Invest in <b>safe public spaces</b> (lighting, transport, community centers) co-designed by girls and young</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a <b>youth volunteer reserve</b> trained in PFA (psychological first aid), GBV-safe referrals, and inclusive emergency response.</li> <li>• Pilot <b>cash-plus micro-grants</b> for young women’s livelihoods in crisis-affected districts (with mentorship and market access).</li> <li>• Establish <b>community healing hubs</b> combining mental health, legal advice, and civic activities to rebuild trust post-crisis.</li> </ul>

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

- **Digital safety sprints** with tech partners to train 300+ young women activists and journalists.
- **Campus anti-harassment challenge:** student teams co-design policies and awareness campaigns with administrations.
- **Peace clubs** in 20 pilot schools/universities; debate, mediation, and civic action modules.
- **Storytelling for solidarity:** youth media producing podcasts/short films on women peacebuilders nationwide.
- **Rapid-response micro-grants** (USD 1–3k) for youth peace actions in mahallas.
- **Aral Sea focus week:** youth actions on climate/health + WPS linkages.



приоритет  
безопасность  
единство  
дружба  
споконствие  
любовь  
стабильность  
природа  
белый  
доброта  
цвет  
чистота

*Photo from the Consultation and Wordcloud of "definitions" of peace by participants*

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

- **Develop a national curriculum** strand on peace, gender equality, and digital citizenship.
- **Establish a Women & Youth Peace Innovation Fund** (public-private) for sustained small grants.
- **Build regional exchanges** (internships/mentorships) for women in public service, STEM, and peacebuilding across Central Asia.
- **Expand community centers** that combine safe spaces, vocational training, mental health services, and civic labs in under-served districts.
- **Institutionalize youth gender-responsive budgeting pilots** with the Ministry of Finance and local hokimiyats.
- **Build a data partnership to track youth WPS indicators** (GBV, participation, perceptions of safety) with the Youth Affairs Agency.

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