Youth and Peace in the Indo-Pacific: Policy, Practice, Action
Report on the Academy of Social Science in Australia (ASSA) Workshop

Helen Berents and Caitlin Mollica
Executive Summary

In 2015 the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, which places youth and youth-led efforts firmly within the broader peace and security discourse. In the five short years since its passing, the youth peacebuilding mandate has seen unprecedented attention and support within the formal peace architecture at international, regional and local levels. However, young people have long been participating and leading peacebuilding initiatives around the world with little attention and minimal funding. Young people in the Indo-Pacific region claim space and lead on diverse issues including climate, justice, violence prevention, and conflict resolution, yet are often excluded from formal spaces of peace and security. As institutions, donors and broader civil society pay increased attention to youth inclusive practices, it is important that lessons are heeded and critical questions are asked.

This report highlights key themes and issues that emerged from a workshop sponsored by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, held November 2019, which brought together established and emerging expertise from across Australia to consider how policy responses and scholarship can better engage with the peace and security challenges facing young people in Australia’s neighbourhood. It raises key challenges and questions including around youth inclusive practices, context-specific engagements, and overcoming persistent stereotypes that frame young people, and concludes by offering recommendations to governments, regional bodies, practitioners, and academics. Youth cannot be an afterthought in the design, development and delivery of programs; the current moment presents an ideal opportunity to include young people to build sustainable peace and secure societies in the region and beyond.

Dr Helen Berents welcomes participants to the ASSA Youth and Peace in the Indo-Pacific Workshop, 27 November 2019

Workshop participants during concluding roundtable discussion, 28 November 2019.
Introduction

In the 2020 report on the progress of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda the UN Secretary General highlighted the importance of ‘amplifying the voices and perspectives of young people in shaping the future of the world’. In the five short years since the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security in 2015, the youth peacebuilding mandate has seen unprecedented attention and support within the formal peace architecture at international, regional and local levels. However, young people have long been participating and leading peacebuilding initiatives around the world with little attention and minimal funding. As institutions, donors and broader civil society pay increased attention to youth inclusive practices, it is important that lessons from existing youth-led peacebuilding, and other formalised efforts such as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, are heeded and critical questions are asked.

This ASSA-sponsored workshop, held 28-29 November 2019 at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane Australia, brought together established and emerging expertise from across Australia to consider how policy responses and scholarship can better engage with the peace and security challenges facing young people in Australia’s neighbourhood, the Indo-Pacific region.

More can still be done to address the complex, interrelated challenges that youth face in the region

Workshop participants were asked to reflect on the contributions of youth to the creation of inclusive and holistic peace; past attempts at developing youth mainstreaming policies and practices at the institutional level; and the barriers and opportunities for youth engagement across the Asia-Pacific. Participants also considered Australia’s potential for leadership in the development and institutionalisation of the emergent YPS agenda, noting in particular Australia’s relationship and engagement with the WPS agenda in the region.

More can still be done to address the complex, interrelated challenges of conflict, forced

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3 The workshop was co-convened by Dr Helen Berents, Dr Caitlin Mollica and Professor Jacqui True (FASSA). It was funded by an ASSA Workshop Program Grant, and also supported by the Centre for Justice, Queensland University of Technology and the School of Government and International Relations, Griffith University. Further information on the workshop can be found at https://socialsciences.org.au/workshop/youth-and-peace-in-the-indo-pacific-policy-practice-action/ and at https://hmberents.com/assa-workshop-youth-and-peace/
4 During the workshop participants used both Indo-Pacific and Asia-Pacific to discuss youth’s engagement in the region, as such both terms are used throughout this report to reflect the geographic fluidity and complexity associated with classifying relationships in the region. In 2019 ASEAN, the region’s central diplomatic institution, released a statement outlining its position on the use of these terms. In it they classified the geographic area of the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean as a “single and interconnected region” with shared interests. See ASEAN. 2019. ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf. It is important to acknowledge that the use of the term Indo-Pacific to describe the region is highly contested and widely debated with many scholars noting the problematic geopolitics associated with its use in policy and practice. See for example, Conley-Tyler, M. 2019. “The Indo-Pacific is the New Asia”, The Interpreter, 28 June https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/indo-pacific-new-asia. It’s use here is a legacy of the original framing of the workshop.
displacement, climate change, and the risk of radicalisation that present significant challenges to youth in the region. At the institutional level the integration of youth’s diverse voices into the political agendas of post-conflict states remains a significant barrier to their substantive engagement. This has broader implications for the peace and security of these states as it suggests that the social and political structures are ill-equipped to respond to the interests and needs of their largest demographic.

The Asia-Pacific region finds itself at a critical turning point regarding the inclusion of youth in the political space. Given this, the workshop assembled established and emerging scholars, and civil society representatives working in the peace and security fields to critically engage with previous efforts to facilitate youth-inclusive peace, and to look forward and assess the potential opportunities and challenges to substantive engagement.

This short report highlights key themes and issues that emerged from the workshop. While the lively discussions and questions were undertaken with Chatham House rules and are presented in general terms, presenters are named throughout this report to recognise their insightful research and specific contributions. Further selected readings of participants’ academic and non-academic contributions can be found at the end of the report. The key themes that emerged during the workshop are definitional questions of ‘youth’, insecurities and challenges facing youth peacebuilders, the roles of institutional frameworks and the YPS agenda, funding and partnership opportunities and challenges, questions of participation, and a reflection on the inclusion of youth voices. They will each be discussed below.

Understanding and Defining Youth: Complexities, Inclusions and Exclusions

Definitions of youth often start with age-markers; however, it is difficult to clearly demarcate who is (or is not) a youth. The UN defines youth as 15-25 years old ‘for statistical purposes’, but Resolution 2250 on YPS takes 18-29 years old as the range. Definitions of youth vary also in national and specific social contexts. Beyond the complexities and limitations of understanding youth through age-markers, it is crucial to unpack simplistic stereotypes that limit how youth are understood and engaged.

Youth have long been seen in oversimplified ways, primarily as a ‘problem to be managed’, as spoilers to peace processes, or as vulnerable and passive victims. These limited frames pre-empt meaningful engagement with youth, and have meant policymakers and practitioners sometimes overlook their complex lived experiences of conflict and myriad forms of engaging (and disrupting) peace.

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It is also crucial to reflect on which youth are being talked about and engaged. Participants discussed the complexities of youth identities and inclusions throughout the workshop. It was broadly acknowledged that youth cannot be idealised, but we must recognise that young people can hold a wide variety of positions, and can be peacebuilders or spoilers or unengaged (sometimes occupying multiple positions simultaneously or at different times). These categories are also political and politicised.

*It should not be incumbent on youth to fit into the ‘right’ box in order to be heard and included.*

Attention must be paid to who names certain youth as peacebuilders or as spoilers, or in whose interest it is to name a generation as unengaged or apathetic. Although less often discussed, it is important to note that some youth (just like some adults) have vested interests in upholding existing entrenched exclusionary systems. Some youth are also not seen as ‘appropriate’ kinds of youth to engage in peacebuilding. While peacebuilding practitioners and scholars have become better at recognising the intersections of gender and age, these challenges point to class and social norms as intersections that need further close attention if we are committed to actually realising inclusive peacebuilding.

Certain youth are also excluded for other reasons. Some young people are ‘hard to reach’ geographically or socially, and so often left out of discussions; and young people with disabilities are often absent from spaces of decision making. Further reflection is required around which young people are being considered when we talk about youth-inclusive peace. Participants emphasised that reflexivity is required by those working in this space to ensure that any agenda is not just inclusive of young people who are ‘acceptable’ but a broad range of youth. Furthermore, the general consensus amongst participants was that actors working within peacebuilding structures need to do the work to unlearn assumptions about the assumed appropriateness of certain youth, and to reach out to those normally not included. It should not be incumbent on youth to fit into the ‘right’ box in order to be heard and included.

**Insecurities and Challenges**

Young people face risks, insecurities, and challenges in undertaking work for peace and security. The 2020 *Report of the UN Secretary-General on Youth and Peace and Security* noted with ‘grave concern’ reports of threats and human rights violations against young peacebuilders. Youth therefore are contributing to peacebuilding despite the absence of an enabling environment as processes and practices to ensure the safety of youth lag behind the work in which youth are engaged.

Risks and insecurities also frame the experiences of all youth and shape the ways in which youth work towards peace and inclusion. As Betty Bakha noted, of acute concern in the Pacific is the issue of climate change as the impact of natural disasters raises urgent questions. Young peace advocates have experience to contribute to addressing the issues of climate change as an existential threat.

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*Youth and Post-Accord Peace Building*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

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but face barriers to participation. Sexual and gender-based violence also poses serious concerns in conflict and post-conflict contexts where age acts as a barrier to accessing services and community support. Phyu Phyu Oo and Sara Davies demonstrated how this is evident in Myanmar where militarised contexts, fragmented communities, and inefficiencies within the formal justice system prevent youth, particularly young women, from accessing justice and can reproduce multiple forms of gendered violence.

Youth are contributing to peacebuilding despite the absence of enabling environments, as processes and practices to ensure the safety of youth lag behind the work in which youth are engaged.

The intersections of age with gender pose particular challenges. Women and youth may not always have the same agenda, a fact which is often elided by the implicit or explicit joining of these two groups in peacebuilding activities and responses. Additionally, peace and security issues have differentiated impacts on young women and young men.

The practices and assumptions that structure young people’s lives are gendered and have consequences for the spaces deemed ‘appropriate’ for young people to engage, and how young men and young women are perceived. Such structures have profound, and often overlooked implications for programs in the region. Firstly, particular attention needs to be paid to capacity building and leadership development for young women in the region (Pruitt). Crucially, space must be safely created for young women’s leadership and participation. Nicole George’s work has shown how intergenerational expectations and gendered regulation of societies and interactions in the Pacific region requires careful consideration, and highlights that capacity building for young women must occur with awareness of local contexts, power dynamics and relations.

While the increased attention to young women’s experiences remains vital, actors must also ensure that young men’s participation in peace and security is not sidelined or shaped by pervasive and problematic assumptions. Growing attention to young men through the framework of ‘preventing/ countering violent extremism’ (P/CVE) programs are one site where such assumptions are often evident. David Duriesmith highlighted the profound issues at play in these contexts: programs that do exist for young men often pathologise them as either risky or at risk, and institutions can reproduce and police patriarchal masculinities that restrict young men’s participation and render certain young men invisible.

These challenges at the intersections of gender and age also hold potential possibilities; to imagine peacebuilding efforts that reject the assumptive practices that structure participation and to make space for conceptions of masculinity beyond patriarchal norms. Further, it allows for the recognition of intergenerational leadership in safe and supported ways and provides opportunities to centre excluded knowledges to help address pressing issues facing the region.
Institutional Frameworks

Institutional frameworks also pose opportunities and challenges to substantive youth participation. Workshop participants reflected on how the structures and norms that inform peacebuilding practice often perpetuate hierarchies of knowledge that exclude the voices of young people (Mollica; George; Carson; Higelin; Berents; Pruitt). In particular, youth face significant barriers to their participation when their interests and needs don’t align with the broader goals of those in positions of power within these institutions, both at the international and local levels.

The presence of power structures that are underpinned by cultural traditions and/or bureaucratic systems produce practices that are often rigid and reliant on narrow understandings of what constitutes “best practice.” As Lisa Carson notes, youth’s past experiences with these formal systems highlights an important distinction between quality and quantity when assessing the capacity of institutions to engage youth. While youth are increasingly visible, representations of their experiences and contributions to peace are often descriptive rather than substantive, as they fail to reflect youth’s capacity to act as knowledge producers (Carson).

While youth advocates often work successfully within informal networks; it is also essential to understand how youth engage with the systems and structures that provide the resources for implementation, such as funding opportunities, and committees for the formation of national action plans (NAPS) (Mollica; Lee-Koo). Workshop participants noted that formal processes, such as constitution making and international financial institutions, are overlooked yet potentially worthwhile sites for substantive youth engagement (Sapiano; Dolan-Evans).

Discussions of institutional engagement also revealed an absence of theorising about the impact of intergenerational dynamics and a lack of ‘conceptual clarity’ regarding who young women are (Lee-Koo; George). For example, as Katrina Lee-Koo noted, NAPs provide a key strategic opportunity for young women to participate in peace as they are a central vehicle for funding and resources; yet more thoughtful engagement is needed regarding how age informs the distribution of these resources and youth’s participation in their development.

While youth are increasingly visible, representations of their experiences and contributions to peace are still often descriptive rather than substantive as they fail to reflect youth’s capacity to act as knowledge producers

Despite the persistence of these representational challenges, workshop participants noted that youth’s increased visibility within these formal institutions presents unique opportunities for advocacy, partnerships, participation and collaboration. Empowerment through advocacy and participation emerged as a key theme during the two-day workshop. These approaches should consider how actors, in particular governments, funding agencies and civil society can support young people in ways that are meaningful to them and responsive to their concerns.
Funding and Partnerships with Youth

Central to discussions of substantive participation are concerns about how the international community can meaningfully invest and partner with youth to create practices that enable their leadership. Recasting notions of “leadership” within the peacebuilding architecture requires a commitment to resourcing practices where youth are driving the development and implementation of ideas (Mollica).

Transparency and accountability... are essential for ensuring that donors, local governments and international institutions uphold their commitments to operationalise the YPS agenda

Empowering youth necessitates an approach to peacebuilding that encourages the building of meaningful relationships between donors, governments and youth (Barkha). An emphasis on building substantive partnerships is key to challenging the narrow lens through which donors and governments perceive of youth-led organisations and their capacity. Workshop participants noted that YPS is often positioned between the children’s rights discourse and the WPS agenda, and thus youth often fail to receive consideration as independent actors (Suthanthiraraj).

To ensure that donor models and decision-making structures centre youth’s voices it is necessary to reconsider how peacebuilding resources are pursued, how outcomes are monitored and measured, and to develop an approach committed to partnering with youth.

The emphasis on partnerships within the institutionalised mandate of YPS highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between youth organisations, international donors and governments (Mollica; Barkha). Central to this discussion is the notion of co-adaptation, which aims to facilitate the sustained buy-in of youth through the development of funding and governance structures that acknowledge youth’s capacity to manage and implement peacebuilding projects (Mollica). This requires a shift in the discourse around what knowledge is valued, which prioritises the contributions brought through lived experiences, not just the passage of time. As workshop participants noted, the development of meaningful partnerships within the YPS space requires a transformative model that invests in youth and their ideas (Mollica; Higelin; Barkha).

Transparency and accountability emerged as key themes from the two-day workshop. In particular, participants suggested that both are essential for ensuring that donors, local governments and international institutions uphold their commitments to operationalise the YPS agenda, and to meaningfully invest in youth’s ideas (Barkha; Mollica). Workshop participants suggested that one of the key ways to facilitate this investment is by prioritising the participation of youth.

Participation

Questions of participation are at the heart of youth inclusion in peace and security. Resolution 2250 includes ‘participation’ as one of its five pillars, however where and how young
people are included and can participate is contested. The success of getting youth on the UN Security Council’s agenda was in large part due to the participation and advocacy of youth themselves (Berents). Yet institutions continue to shape the spaces in which youth can participate. Discourses of ‘inclusivity’ and ‘participation’ can lead to forms of passive presence rather than active engagement (Carson).

Youth peace advocates have strategically used the YPS agenda to leverage access and voice in their own local or national contexts; the agenda has been used as a way of legitimising their participation. However, as Helen Berents’ research has shown, youth are also sceptical of the agenda and work actively to resist being co-opted by agendas led by institutions and adults with their own interests.

Efforts to engage youth must centre them as having the knowledge and capacity to contribute, they must avoid tokenism, and they must avoid setting young people up for disappointment

Workshop participants posed multiple challenges to the idea of an institutional agenda, emphasising the need for youth inclusive peace to be built in local contexts, and to resist the depoliticisation of the agenda. Participants also argued that efforts need to be rooted in movements not in institutions or projects (Carson; Higelin). Such calls challenge the institutional structures that shape how peacebuilding ‘is done’ in the region.

Participation can also be understood and undertaken without reference to institutions and agendas. Efforts by young people themselves to effect change in their communities and countries in the Asia-Pacific can be significant. In the lead up to the Bougainville referendum Erica Rose Jeffrey described how youth engaged in creative practices to speak about their ideas of peace and coexistence, shaping conversations in their community. Betty Bahka explained that across the Pacific Islands, young climate activists challenge their exclusion from decision making through local and transnational networking to ensure their voices are heard.

Efforts to engage youth must centre them as having the knowledge and capacity to contribute (Lee-Koo), they must avoid tokenism and the reproduction of narrow spaces of limited representation (Berents; Carson), and they must be undertaken carefully to avoid setting young people up for disappointment (Suthanthiraraj; George). While efforts to give youth a ‘seat at the table’ have created opportunities for greater visibility; future efforts for youth inclusion must re-conceptualise the spaces where participation occurs. Participation must also include more than the ‘right’ kind of young people if it is to be meaningful and legitimate.

Youth Voices

Due to the nature of the grant that permitted this workshop, only Australian-based researchers and practitioners participated, although there were a number of youth peace advocates from the region present due to their affiliation with Australian institutions.
The breadth and depth of discussion across the workshop demonstrates the richness of work being undertaken with and for youth by Australian-based academics, and evidences Australia as a key site for academic attention on YPS. Despite these observations, we note that there were important voices largely absent: those of youth themselves.

The inclusion of youth and the issues of concern to youth in scholarship and practice, is a pressing necessity. Adopting the slogan popularised by disability-rights activists, youth peace advocates have called for ‘nothing about us, without us’. Careful and urgent attention must be paid to undertaking research that is sensitive to the multiple layers of privilege and power that structure relationships, and which centre youth voices as authoritative and experienced. Participants at the workshop highlighted the complexities of this terrain and discussed strategies and practices that should be adopted.

A critical YPS approach that takes young people’s experience seriously as a site of knowledge requires academics to consider the obligations inherent in their work to support youth advocates. One example is co-authoring with youth themselves, with academics doing the work to overcome obstacles to enable these genuinely collaborative practices.

Conclusions: Centring Youth, Strengthening Peace

Cumulatively, contributions to the workshop emphatically highlighted a core point: that youth cannot be an afterthought in the design, development and delivery of programs. Rather they must be at minimum involved, and ideally leading, throughout. To centre considerations of youth requires recognition of the realities of young people’s experiences with peace and security and how these inform the relationships that youth have in social and political spaces. It requires both practitioners and academics to be responsive to the complexities of young people’s lives and the unique challenges they face. There are (unresolvable) tensions between formal agendas and local peace efforts, and workshop participants suggested attention should perhaps be allocated to prioritizing movements rather than institutions.

Young people are already actively working across the region in response to peace and security challenges. There are opportunities for the Australian government, civil society, and regional organisations to join with these youth and to show leadership on YPS. However, efforts must not be tokenistic, but rather funded meaningfully and implemented with long-term commitment.

Attention must be paid to the emergent tensions between collaboration and competition within institutions and organisations as youth-inclusive practices are ‘operationalised’ and ‘institutionalised’. Opportunity barriers, including intergenerational hierarchies, cultural power structures, bureaucracy, as well as the cost of peacebuilding contribute to these tensions and often result in the crowding out of youth.
Consideration of youth inclusive peace practices sit within a broader mandate for inclusive peace, which also includes the Children and Armed Conflict agenda and WPS agenda. While broadly considered complementary, these agendas have the potential to compete for funding and attention. These opportunity gaps have a significant impact on the work of youth peacebuilding advocates and allies. Workshop participants noted that the implementation of the YPS agenda was key, as without a serious commitment to operationalising the mandates and principles within UN Resolution 2250, the normative contributions of the agenda are significantly diminished.

Knowledge gained from reflecting on the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the WPS agenda offer important lessons for YPS. In particular, notions of transparency, accountability, partnerships and substantive participation resonate across both agendas. Similarly, considering the relationship between formal and informal modes of engagement are key considerations for both women and youth as they offer opportunities for and barriers to participation. Yet these reflections on the crosscutting issues between the agendas also highlighted the distinctiveness of the youth agenda and demonstrated a need in certain contexts to centre youth’s voices, as distinct from women. This recognition will assist in shifting the discourse about youth to acknowledge their role as knowledge producers.

Finally, it is important to note that a ‘formal(ised)’ YPS Agenda is not the only way of engaging or understanding youth inclusive peace practices. Firstly, while it undoubtedly presents important and much-needed opportunities, workshop participants also highlighted the dangers of ‘agenda fatigue’.

Including yet another institutionalised agenda potentially increases pressures on already-overstretched civil society and youth peace advocates; and can be experienced as resource-competition rather than collaboration in peacebuilding contexts which are always under-resourced.

Secondly, focus on institutions and institutionally-led processes can render invisible activities and engagements by certain youth. Efforts to ‘localise’ agendas can reproduce categories of inclusion and exclusion, and direct support and resources away from programs that may be crucial in the local context, but which aren’t seen as central to institutional frameworks or priorities. Young people have long been engaging in peacebuilding and responding to insecurity in their local contexts. While the YPS agenda can be harnessed to support and strengthen these efforts, it should not become monolithic in discussions of young people’s involvement in peace and security.

Youth cannot be an afterthought in the design, development and delivery of programs

This workshop highlighted the breadth of work being done in Australia on considering youth and peacebuilding in the region and beyond. However urgent and necessary questions emerged concerning youth inclusive practices, context-specific engagements, and overcoming the persistent assumptions and practices that underpin scholarly and practitioner work. As attention to youth, peace and security grows in our region and globally, it is timely to reflect on work to date and develop future agendas and best practices going forward.
Considerations and Recommendations for Future Work

Bringing together contributions and insights from across the workshop, we offer here some considerations and recommendations for governments, regional bodies, practitioners, and academics working on and with youth and peacebuilding.11

For All
- Programs and research must include clear monitoring and reporting mechanisms that feed information back to institutions but also to communities and youth-led organisations on the ground.
- Attention to which youth are being included, and deliberate efforts to expand the inclusion of diverse, hard-to-reach, and often excluded youth are needed. This requires a rejection of the idea that there is a ‘right kind’ of youth to include in peace and security programs.

For Governments and Regional Bodies
- Adequately fund peace and security programs led by youth in the region. This should be in addition to existing programs focusing on gender. Funding models must consider barriers youth encounter in accessing donor support including the potential lack of experience with grant applications. Greater access to low-barrier ‘seed funding’ for youth-led peacebuilding organisations.
- Learn from the successes and failures experienced while engaging with the WPS agenda and leadership in peace and development in the region; however, resist simply subsuming youth-focused work within existing gender-focused initiatives.
- Commit to including youth themselves in all opportunities for consultations and participation.

For Practitioners and Academics
- Develop committed and nuanced recognition of local and non-institutional practices and approaches undertaken by youth.
- Pay ongoing, critical attention to the consequences of uneven power relations. This includes self-reflection, challenging assumptions about who ‘belongs’, and working actively to both open space to youth, but also cede space to young people themselves.
- Researchers and practitioners must pay attention to how work is undertaken including committing to include young people as co-producers of knowledge, and co-authors of work. This requires careful consideration at research design and implementation stages and thought in how knowledge that is produced is returned to youth who contributed.

11 These considerations and recommendations were informed by discussions throughout the workshop but reflect the authors’ (Berents and Mollica) interpretation and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other participants.
Workshop Participants

- Betty Barkha, Monash University (Presenter)
- Helen Berents, QUT (Presenter)
- Lisa Carson, UNSW, YWILPF (Presenter)
- Sara Davies, Griffith University (Presenter)
- Eliot Dolan-Evans, Monash (Presenter)
- David Duriesmith, UQ (Presenter)
- Nicole George, UQ (Presenter)
- Caitlin Hamilton, La Trobe University
- Susan Harris-Rimmer, Griffith University
- Michelle Higelin, Action Aid (Presenter)

- Erica Rose Jeffreyy, Peace and Conflict Studies Institute Australia (PACSIA) (Presenter)
- Katrina Lee-Koo, Monash University (Presenter)
- Caitlin Mollica, Griffith (Presenter)
- Phyuu Phyuu Oo, Griffith University (Presenter)
- Lesley Pruitt, Melbourne University (Presenter)
- Primativo III Ragandang, ANU
- Michelle Ringrose, QUT
- Jenna Sapiano, Monash University (Presenter)
- Kavitha Suthanthiraraj, Sydney University (Presenter)
- Jacqui True, Monash

Selected published resources by participants


This workshop took place on the land of the Turrbal and Yugara people, and we acknowledge them as the First Nation owners of the site where the Queensland University of Technology now stands. The workshop conveners pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research and learning.
About the Authors

QUT Centre for Justice is a think tank for social justice that aims to empower and enable citizens, consumers and communities through solutions-oriented research. Our vision is to democratise justice by improving opportunities for health and well-being and enhancing the inclusiveness of work and education while widening access to justice.

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Dr Helen Berents is an Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow in the School of Justice, Faculty of Law at the Queensland University of Technology, and a member of the QUT Centre for Justice. Her DECRA Fellowship examines youth-led peace advocacy and engagement in the context of the UN’s emergent Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

Helen’s research is interested children and youth, peace and conflict, and local responses to violence and insecurity. Helen’s work draws on feminist theories, international relations, peace and conflict studies, and the sociology of youth to inform her work on representations of youth in conflict and crises, and genuine engagement with the lived experiences of violence-affected young people. Her work has been published in journals including International Political Sociology, International Feminist Journal of Political, International Affairs, and Critical Studies on Security. Her book, Young People and Everyday Peace: Exclusion, Insecurity and Peacebuilding in Colombia was published in 2018.

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Dr. Caitlin Mollica is a lecturer in the School of Justice, Faculty of Law at QUT and a member of the QUT Centre for Justice. She has a PhD in Political Science from Griffith University and an MA in Human Rights Studies from Columbia University. Her research interests include youth, gender, transitional justice and human rights. Caitlin’s primary research considers the engagement of young people with transitional justice, reconciliation and human rights practices. Her current research examines the relationship between youth-led organisations and donors in the contexts of the international mandate for youth-inclusive peacebuilding outlined in United Nations Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.

This report emerges from the workshop ‘Youth and Peace in the Indo-Pacific: Policy, Practice, Action’, held at QUT in November 2019, that was funded by an Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) Workshop Grant. ASSA was established in 1971 to recognise and champion excellence in the social sciences and to provide evidence-based advice on a range of social policy issues.