



Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN Australia)

Submission to the
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes

*Additional Information:
A National Youth Settlement Strategy
Working Draft*

October 2017

1. Background

This working draft of a national Youth Settlement Strategy has been prepared for the Joint Standing Committee on Migration (the Committee) for consideration in the Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes (the Inquiry).

Early in 2017, MYAN provided a written submission¹ on this Inquiry to the Committee and appeared at a public hearing in NSW. MYAN partner organisations at the state and territory levels also made submissions and provided evidence at public hearings. The Inquiry presents an important opportunity to strengthen how Australia best meets and measures the settlement outcomes for young people.

One of MYAN's key recommendations to the Inquiry was the development of a national Youth Settlement Strategy. A national Youth Settlement Strategy would facilitate a more planned, coordinated and consistent approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people. This would better ensure that this group of young people achieve positive settlement outcomes – successfully negotiating the settlement journey by accessing the support and opportunities they need.

A more planned approach to youth settlement would also strengthen existing settlement programs and resources to ensure that young people who come to Australia as migrants or refugees become active participants in and contributors to Australian society.

MYAN has prepared this working draft of a national Youth Settlement Strategy for consideration by the Committee to progress this recommendation. It draws on the key recommendations MYAN made in its submission to the Committee, as well as MYAN's National Youth Settlement Framework.²

Consultations will need to be held (with government, the non-government sectors - both settlement and mainstream services – and young people) to progress this draft to a final strategy. MYAN is best placed to undertake this work, in partnership with government, the non-government sector and young people.

Recommendation to the Committee

That MYAN is engaged to progress this draft to develop a final national Youth Settlement Strategy, undertaking consultations as part of this work.

¹ See Appendix A for the full recommendations

² MYAN (2016). National Youth Settlement Framework. Melbourne: Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN).



MYAN Australia

The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) is Australia's national peak body representing the needs and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and those who work with them. MYAN works in partnership with young people, government and non-government agencies at the state and national levels to support a nationally consistent approach to addressing the particular needs of multicultural young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in policy and service delivery.

MYAN works with the mainstream youth and broader settlement sectors in order to achieve good settlement outcomes for young people. MYAN has partners in each of Australia's states and territories through which it facilitates a national approach to youth settlement and a multicultural youth specialist approach across Australia.

The National Youth Settlement Framework

With the support of government, MYAN developed the National Youth Settlement Framework (the Framework). Released in 2016, the Framework is Australia's first tool for supporting and measuring good youth settlement. It is also the first of its kind globally.

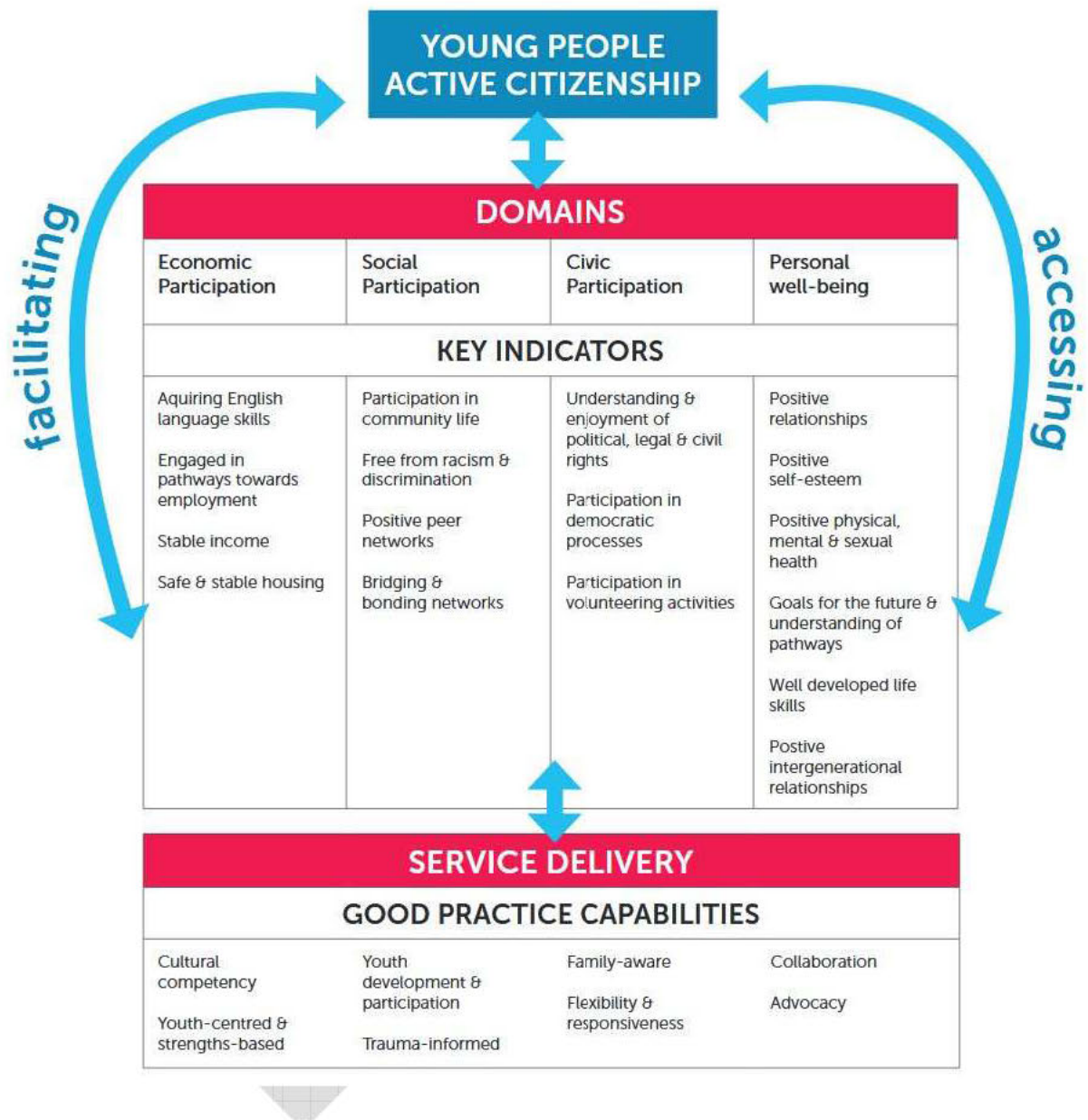
Developed through consultations with young people, government and the youth and settlement sectors, it is designed to equip policy makers and service providers with the knowledge and tools for achieving and measuring good settlement outcomes for young people. Good youth settlement is understood as active citizenship; where young people are supported to build social capital and agency to become active participants in and contributors to Australia.

The Framework provides a set of indicators for achieving active citizenship, across the four domains of: Economic Participation, Social Participation, Civic Participation and Personal Well-Being.

The Framework also provides a set of eight good practice capabilities for application in service delivery. These can be applied across all sectors, including the health, youth, education, employment and settlement sectors, in both government and non-government settings. When applied, they address the range of barriers young people face in accessing the support and opportunities they need to achieve active citizenship.

The Framework reflects the core elements of a multicultural youth specialist approach, bringing together good practice in youth work and settlement support. The Framework also provides the foundation for a national Youth Settlement Strategy.

Figure 2. Domains, indicators and good practice capabilities for active citizenship³



³ MYAN (2016). National Youth Settlement Framework, p. 20

2. Introduction

Why a national Youth Settlement Strategy?

Young Australians from refugee and migrant backgrounds are a diverse population group who commonly display immense resilience. However, they also face particular challenges in accessing the support and opportunities they need to navigate the demands of building a life in a new country.

The challenges young people face navigating the settlement journey are compounded by the developmental tasks of adolescence including:

- Learning a new language and negotiating unfamiliar education and employment pathways (sometimes with a history of disrupted or no formal education).
- Understanding and negotiating a new culture/cultures and cultural values.
- Establishing new peer networks.
- navigating unfamiliar and relatively complex social systems and laws, including new rights and responsibilities.
- Negotiating new or changed family structures, roles, responsibilities and relationships in the context of new concepts of independence, autonomy, freedom and child and youth rights.
- Negotiating (multicultural) identity.
- Juggling family and community expectations.
- Managing grief and loss associated with separation from peers or family.
- Building social capital as a young person in their new context.

The Australian government has recognised for some time that the needs of young people in settlement are unique and addressing them requires a targeted approach. One of the many ways Australia has distinguished itself as a world leader in settlement has been the investment in youth approaches in settlement services, and structures that support this. While these are important developments, improvements could strengthen and better coordinate this investment.

Important youth initiatives in Australian settlement services in recent years have been:

- Youth-specific services stream in the Settlement Grants Programme and the Youth Transitions Support Pilot (YTSP).
- The Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors Programme.
- Funding for MYAN as one of three peak bodies in settlement services (an internationally unique model).

- Investment in youth focused-approaches through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).

Additionally, while not youth-specific, the Humanitarian Services Program (HSP) will have case management plans for every person in a family group, regardless of their age⁴.

However, there is currently no overarching plan or strategy to guide services in a coordinated approach to the support and referral of newly arrived young people as they settle over time (i.e. from 'on-arrival' through to the 5-year-limit of federally-funded settlement services). This is particularly apparent for young people who have transitioned out of (the current) Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program and are in the early stages of needing multifaceted support interventions.

3. Key principles

A national Youth Settlement Strategy:

- Uses the existing National Youth Settlement Framework to support, benchmark and measure good practice in youth settlement and measure outcomes for this group.
- Recognises the particular needs of young people in settlement and the importance of a targeted approach along the settlement continuum to meeting these needs.
- Takes a long-term view of settlement, recognising that the needs of refugee and migrant young people continue beyond the first five years of settlement. An investment in structures, policy and programs would ensure all young people, regardless of cultural background or migration history, can access the support and opportunities they need to feel they belong, and be active participants in and contributors to all aspects of Australian society.
- Involves youth-specific approaches to support a targeted focus on youth across settlement policy, systems and programming.
- Recognises that multicultural youth specialist services play a critical role in delivering and supporting this targeted approach.
- Provides structured and targeted support early in the settlement period as an important factor contributing to active participation and engagement.
- Enables a focus on both youth-centred and youth development approaches in policy and service delivery, in the first five years after arrival and beyond.
- Strengthens collaboration across government, within the non-government sector and between government and the non-government sector (in order to meet discreet and intersectional needs).
- Recognises the life stages and related needs across the 12-24 age range (i.e. 12 – 15 years, 16 – 18 years and young adults 18 – 24 years).

⁴ DSS (2017). Humanitarian Services Program Fact Sheet. Available from https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2017/hsp_factsheet_-_august_2017_0.pdf

- Expands eligibility for settlement services and supports to all newly arrived young people based on need rather than a defined time period or visa subclass - to promote participation and decrease the likelihood of early disengagement and marginalisation. Time and resources should be directed to processes that assess need, prior to referral to program responses.
- Builds on existing policy and programs (services, supports, structures) and strengthens a continuum of support across existing settlement services.
- Recognises the importance of capacity building with the sector - with providers delivering the Humanitarian Settlement Program and mainstream services.

4. Key components of a Youth Settlement Strategy

A national Youth Settlement Strategy provides the framework within which the objectives of effective settlement for young people can be articulated and assessed. It provides the basis for a cohesive and well-coordinated national approach.

Specifically, a national Youth Settlement Strategy provides the foundations for:

- Coordinating effort across the three levels of Government
- Incorporating a youth perspective
- Improving coordination of information and referral pathways
- Managing the intersection of specialist and mainstream services
- Supporting improvements by measuring progress
- Implementing the National Youth Settlement Framework

4.1 Coordinating effort across the three levels of government

A national Youth Settlement Strategy provides the structure to coordinate and integrate services to meet known and emerging needs of young people settling in Australia.⁵ Improving service provision requires communication, cooperation and coordination between agencies at all levels of government.⁶

Development and implementation of a national Youth Settlement Strategy will require strong cross-government and interdepartmental (or cross-portfolio) collaboration would assist with:

⁵ MYAN acknowledges that the HSP is designed to do this for humanitarian entrants

⁶ For those government agencies delivering or funding key services related to settlement, cross-government coordination is also required to ensure that professional development and training for generalist and government services is enhanced to support culturally and linguistically responsive practice (ensuring that mainstream or generalist services are adequately equipped with the skills and knowledge to respond to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds).

- Clarifying responsibility for providing services.
- Improving coordination of service delivery.
- Improving the targeting of resources and avoidance of gaps and duplication.
- Providing improved outcomes for migrants and refugees in the form of targeted and accessible services.

The portfolios which have a key role in supporting youth arrivals are:

- Health (particularly in relation to mental health)
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Recreation and Sport

A national Youth Settlement Strategy should work in tandem with the National Settlement Framework, which was developed by the Australian government to improve coordination across government in supporting settlement outcomes.

The clear synergies between the intentions of both the National Settlement Framework and a national Youth Settlement Strategy suggest that both should be aligned as far as possible, while maintaining a specific focus on the youth population.⁷

Cross-government and interdepartmental coordination mechanisms could include:

- a ministerial council of federal, state and territory ministers to provide general guidance on settlement planning issues;
- a committee of officials from the Department of Social Services and state and territory government agencies responsible for multicultural affairs;
- interdepartmental working groups comprised of senior Commonwealth officials, which aim to resolve issues that span more than one department, either at the state/territory level or the national level⁸.

~~The development and implementation of a national Youth Settlement Strategy should also be provided with regular advice by the relevant refugee/migrant sector peak bodies, with a focus on the appropriateness and adequacy of youth services.~~

⁷ See DAA (2016) National settlement Framework,

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/11_2016/the_national_settlement_framework.pdf

A comparable example from New Zealand is provided by the implementation of a National Refugee Strategy as an inter-agency commitment <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/...strategies.../refugee-resettlement-strategy>

⁸ This would complement the existing Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group (SOSOG) structure. SOSOG provides a forum for senior officials of the Commonwealth and States and Territories as well as representatives from local government to consult and exchange information on a variety of settlement connected issues.

4.2 Incorporating a Youth Perspective

It is important that a national Youth Settlement Strategy has input from those young people in the target group and maximize opportunities for all young people to *have a voice* in promoting their own views and ideas on issues important to them.⁹

A national Youth Settlement Strategy will provide a framework which brings together young peoples' goals for settling in Australia, combined with Government's vision for youth settlement – bringing together support from government agencies, settlement partners, young people and their families and communities.

Mechanisms such as a national advisory body of refugee and CALD young people would provide important feedback on the implementation of a national Youth Settlement Strategy.

4.3 Improving coordination of information and referral pathways

A priority for a national Youth Settlement Strategy is the development of improved coordination and referral pathways across settlement services and between settlement and mainstream services.

While the Humanitarian Services Program (HSP) will have case management plans for every person in a family group, regardless of their age, a need remains for the development of an on-arrival case coordination model to provide holistic needs analysis and tailored support for all newly arrived young people aged 12 to 25 years (in the context of family).¹⁰

This includes developing greater consistency in identifying and assessing a young person's needs, and making a referral to appropriate services. This will require capacity building with HSP providers to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and service delivery models to undertake adequate assessment with young people.

Options for improving integration of youth settlement services include promoting youth settlement services through community hubs where referrals to the range of settlement support programs can be facilitated, or progressively moving to ensure that youth service providers establish informed collaborative arrangements with other settlement support providers.

⁹ "What's important to YOUTH from refugee and migrant backgrounds?", Centre for Multicultural Youth response to the Victorian Government's Youth discussion paper, November 2015

¹⁰ Most youth services and support programs in Australia provide assistance to the 12-15 age group but for the purposes of settlement services young people are currently defined as those between the ages of 15 and 24. The restriction of youth program funding under settlement services to young people over the age of 15 means that young people in the early phase of adolescence (a critical phase of emotional, social and physical development) are specifically excluded from programs and supports available to other young people in their settlement journey.

4.4 Managing the intersection of specialist and generalist services

A national Youth Settlement Strategy will facilitate the delivery of youth settlement support by a mix of specialist and generalist services.

The incorporation of a cross-portfolio perspective in a national Youth Settlement Strategy will provide the opportunity to assess the capacity of mainstream services to assist young people in the settlement process and develop options to strengthen them. Improved collaboration and capacity building between settlement and mainstream services is fundamental to improving youth settlement outcomes.

Models based on collaboration and coordination across and within settlement systems and mainstream services already exist and provide a continuity of services to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds throughout their settlement journey - preventing and reducing crisis events.

Multicultural youth specialist services are important sites of piloting, developing and delivering youth-specific settlement strategies. Multicultural youth specialist services exist in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Queensland, with multicultural youth specialist networks operating in Western Australia and Tasmania. These services provide critical coordination, programming and capacity building services – to both the settlement and mainstream sectors.

Supporting investment in multicultural youth specialist services in each state and territory will facilitate greater national consistency and coordination in the implementation of a national Youth Settlement Strategy.

4.5 Supporting improvements by measuring progress

An effective Youth Settlement Strategy will measure and be based on nationally consistent data.

Continuous improvement requires collecting, collating, measuring and monitoring in order to produce innovation.¹¹ Improving consistent national data collection to monitor and measure settlement outcomes for young people will allow comparative analysis across sites and over time and build a robust evidence-base to inform policy and service design, and will assist in measuring successful strategies and identifying gaps.¹²

¹¹ Refugee Health and Wellbeing, A strategic framework for Queensland 2016, published by the State of Queensland (Queensland Health), March 2016

¹² As an example, the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy seeks to ensure progress in improving the integration outcomes of new arrivals by annual measurement against seven success indicators and one target (Education) approved by the New Zealand Government. Baseline data has been established as a basis for assessing subsequent progress. Available from <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/...strategies.../refugee-resettlement-strategy>



Australia's National Youth Settlement Framework provides the tools for improving the consistent measurement of progress, benchmarking and outcomes.

4.6 **National Youth Settlement Framework**

The National Youth Settlement Framework provides the foundation for a National Youth Settlement Strategy. The Framework provides the tools to strengthen, support and measure outcomes for young people in settlement.

MYAN delivers training and professional development on implementing the Framework across Australia - to service providers and policy makers in government and the non-government sectors (across education, health, sport and recreation, settlement and justice).

A national Youth Settlement Strategy will draw on the Framework to inform professional development (e.g. training on the National Youth Settlement Framework should be delivered to all HSP providers) and facilitate nationally consistent support to young people settling in Australia.

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Appendix A

MYAN Australia Recommendations to the Inquiry into Migrant Settlement Outcomes

Mix, coordination and extent of settlement services available and the effectiveness of these services in promoting better settlement outcomes for migrants

Develop a national youth settlement strategy to support a more targeted, consistent and coordinated approach to meeting the settlement needs of young people.

Improve consistency in youth settlement services through benchmarking that is embedded in national guidelines, based on the National Youth Settlement Framework.

Improve nationally consistent data collection to monitor and measure settlement outcomes for young people – to allow comparative analysis across sites and over time and build a robust evidence-base.

Invest in research that examines the factors that contribute to and support successful settlement outcomes for young people.

Invest in multicultural youth specialist services in each state and territory to facilitate a nationally consistent and coordinated approach to youth settlement.

Expand the eligibility criteria for the Settlement Services Program, so that support can be based on need rather than a defined time period or visa sub class.

Expand the definition of youth in settlement services to include young people between the ages of 12 and 15 years.

Improve youth-focused support in the Humanitarian Settlement Services through capacity building and more meaningful completion of the Youth Sub-Plans.

Invest in support to assist families and communities to help young people in their settlement journey.

Ensure the mainstream sector is well-equipped to support young people to settle well through investing in initiatives that:

- Facilitate collaboration between the settlement and mainstream sectors and
- Build the capacity of mainstream services to ensure they are effectively responding to the needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Increase investment in youth-centered support in particular areas, including:

- Health:
 - Culturally appropriate mental health and sexual and reproductive health programs.
- Education:
 - Bridging programs that support educational transitions in every state and territory.
 - Programs that support parent/carers engagement in young people's educational journey.
 - Existing models of multicultural youth workers based in schools – expand to all states and territories.

- Employment:
 - Programs that support young people's transition from education/training to employment
 - Targeted programs that develop young people's social capital and build networks with potential employers (including volunteer and internship opportunities)
 - Education and employment programs that target supports to at risk and disengaged young people, including investment in programs that utilise mentors to support young people.
- Sporting and recreational engagement for young people:
 - Invest in initiatives that foster social cohesion and community harmony, including activities and programs that bring together diverse groups of young people to build their social connections and strengthen a sense of belonging in Australian society.

National and international best practice strategies for improving migrant settlement outcomes and prospects

Continue to identify models of best practice strategies across Australia and facilitate links between resettlement countries and those supporting the integration of migrants, to share knowledge and practice.

The importance of English language ability on a migrant's, or prospective migrant's, settlement outcomes

That the government does not use pre-migration English ability to screen for potential settlement outcomes as it is not substantiated by a sound evidence-base.

That the Australian Government maintain its commitment to delivering appropriate English language programs for all recent arrivals that require it, and enhance this with more targeted investment in young people's English language learning. This includes:

- Increase investment into programs that support young people's transition from intensive English language programs into mainstream secondary schools or from AMEP into further training/higher education.
- Invest in initiatives that support young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in and outside the classroom, e.g. homework support groups.
- Develop nationally consistent definitions, measurements and cost structures for English language provision to newly arrived young people that are tied closely to the education needs and outcomes of students.
- Establish school accountability mechanisms to ensure that loadings for students with limited English skills are firmly tied to the educational needs of this cohort.

That the Australian Government develop a national measure of English language proficiency to direct loadings to the most vulnerable students.

Whether current migration processes adequately assess a prospective migrant's settlement prospects



That the Australian government do not make changes to Australia's migration processes to assess a person's likelihood of successfully integrating before their arrival but continue to invest in the settlement or integration capacity of Australia to support successful settlement.

That governments invest in developing an evidence-base for what contributes to successful settlement for young people, their families and communities.

That conversations about settlement outcomes are conducted in respectful and constructive ways, are evidence-based and include the voices of young people.

Extend investment in initiatives that support the development of young people's leadership skills and facilitate their civic and social participation.

Social engagement of youth migrants, including involvement of youth migrants in anti-social behavior such as gang activity, and the adequacy of the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions as a means to address issues arising from this behavior

That the Australian government make no further changes to the Migration Act 1958 character test provisions. Current checks and balances, including security screening, are adequate and a commitment to a fair, impartial and non-discriminatory migration system is best for Australia and all Australians.

That all levels of government to avoid misrepresentations and stereotyping of refugee and migrant young people in public narratives and ensure strong leadership to support rather than undermine social cohesion.

Invest in early intervention and diversion programs to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

Ensure more detailed and nationally consistent data is collected on young people engaged in criminal activity, including program outcomes, to inform program delivery and to build an evidence base on 'what works'.

Ensure that youth justice responses are culturally appropriate and provide support that responds to the specific needs of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Invest in initiatives that facilitate opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and contribute to change in their communities.