

Global Refugee Youth Consultations

(2015 – 2016)

Concept Note



UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission,

In coordination with the
Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group

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Why Global Refugee Youth Consultations?

Young people are increasingly taking on roles as change-makers, ensuring their voices are heard in critical global debates such as the post 2015 development agenda.¹ We are witnessing a global rise in youth activism in which social movements from Occupy Wall Street, to the Arab Spring Uprisings, and mass demonstrations on the streets of Chile are being led by young people.² Globalisation, increased access to technology and the ever-growing global inter-connectedness that digital media facilitates, has provided opportunities and incentives for increased mobility contributing to a growing conscientization of youth as well as greater global visibility of young leaders and activists. Youth radicalization can contribute to positive social change, but it can also have negative consequences (such as recruitment into extremist-violent terror organizations, such as ISIS). Resultantly, around the world, policy-makers are recognizing the importance of channelling youth activism to achieve positive social outcomes.³

An example of this in 2014 was the Global Forum on Youth Policy, the first of its kind, which saw seven hundred young people come together in Baku, Azerbaijan. The young participants sat alongside representatives from NGO's, United Nations organisations and governments from 165 countries. The purpose was to discuss the state of Youth Policies globally in preparation for the twentieth anniversary of the UN World Programme of Action for Youth in 2015.⁴ The Global Forum concluded with participants agreeing the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies.⁵

Refugee youth are no different; despite their uncertain futures they are equally impacted by the new information age and inter-connectedness that globalisation and technological innovation bring. Some young refugees are attracted by the opportunities for mobility and desire the '*normal*' lives they see other youth enjoying. Consequently, as Europe is now experiencing, many young refugees become frustrated with their situations and consider onward movement. For other young refugees, who for their own reasons do not or cannot follow their peers, the discrimination, marginalization and hardship of forced displacement can increase their susceptibility to exploitation and negative influences. Whilst young men are particularly vulnerable, adolescent girls and young women who are already marginalised, isolated and at a greater risk of sexual violence are increasingly affected.⁶

The reality is that in forced displacement situations, the unique capacities and needs of refugee youth are often overlooked by humanitarian organisations. Their needs rarely met, they frequently fall between-the-gaps of child and adult programming. Few humanitarian organizations have programmes specifically targeted at youth and there is often limited funding available and earmarked for their direct

¹ See <http://www.youthpost2015.org/wordpress/report/youthvoices.pdf>

² See for example <http://www.heathwoodpress.com/why-recent-global-uprisings-are-led-by-youth-gayle-kimball/>

³ See for example <http://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/PreventingYouthRadicalizationProgramReport-2012.pdf>

⁴ See <http://www.youthpolicyforum.org/>

⁵ See <http://youthpolicyforum.org/documents/commitment.pdf>

⁶ Some Facts: 50% of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16; globally, 16 million girls aged 15-19 years give birth every year, approximately 11% of all births worldwide; in low- and middle-income countries, almost 10% of girls are mothers by age 16 years; the risk of pregnancy-related death is twice as high for girls aged 15-19 and five times higher for girls aged 10-14 compared to women in their twenties; 66 million girls worldwide are not in school and one in every three girls is married before her 18th birthday

benefit. Exacerbating this is the absence of holistic guidance and policies on good programming for youth in humanitarian contexts. While some sectors, most noticeably Health (adolescent sexual and reproductive health) and Education have developed tools and other guidance materials, most others including Livelihoods, DRR, Peace-building and conflict resolution have not.

The *Youth Voices on a Post-2015 World*⁷ global youth consultations in 2012 and 2013, actively sought the voices of youth such as refugees, who are rarely heard in global debates and face particular social, cultural, economic, geographic and religious barriers to participation in decision-making processes. Even with this objective, only 7 of the 346 participants were refugees.⁸ Refugee youth also find themselves significantly under-represented in other global youth forums (such as the Global Youth Action Network⁹; the Youth Advocacy Group for the UN Global Education First Initiative¹⁰) and in regional youth bodies (such as the European Youth Forum¹¹ and the Latin American Youth Forum).¹²

There is it appears a glaring need to reach-out to refugee and displaced youth,¹³ including adolescent girls and young women. The requirement is to engage with them through meaningful dialogue to identify their hopes, visions and ideas for the future; and working in partnership identify ways for them to realize their aspirations. There is also a need to provide opportunities for refugee youth's voices and youth leaders to be included in pre-existing global, regional and national youth forums, dialogues and debates, to ensure that their perspective is heard. As 'youth' is the overarching theme of the 2016 annual UNHCR – NGO Consultations, it is essential that we act now to ensure that the voices of refugee youth are heard and can participate in, inform and shape the outcomes. To facilitate this, UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission along with international NGO partners from the Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies (YAE) Advocacy Group¹⁴ and national organizations, are planning to undertake the first of its kind – 'Global Refugee Youth Consultations' (GRYC). What do we want to achieve?

The consultations will give refugee youth a voice, providing them with an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue on issues that affect them. It will begin a process that will see positive changes in outcomes for refugee youth as well as in the way the humanitarian community engages with and works for and with them. The *Theory of Change* model below outlines the process and changes that WRC and

⁷ The project was initiated by members of the DFID / CSO Youth Working Group and with the support of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Union. See: <http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/youth-voices-post-2015-world-pdf>

⁸ See <http://www.youthpost2015.org/wordpress/report/youthvoices.pdf> Appendix 1

⁹ See <http://gyan.tigweb.org/>

¹⁰ See <http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/youthadvocacygroup.html>

¹¹ See <http://www.youthforum.org/>

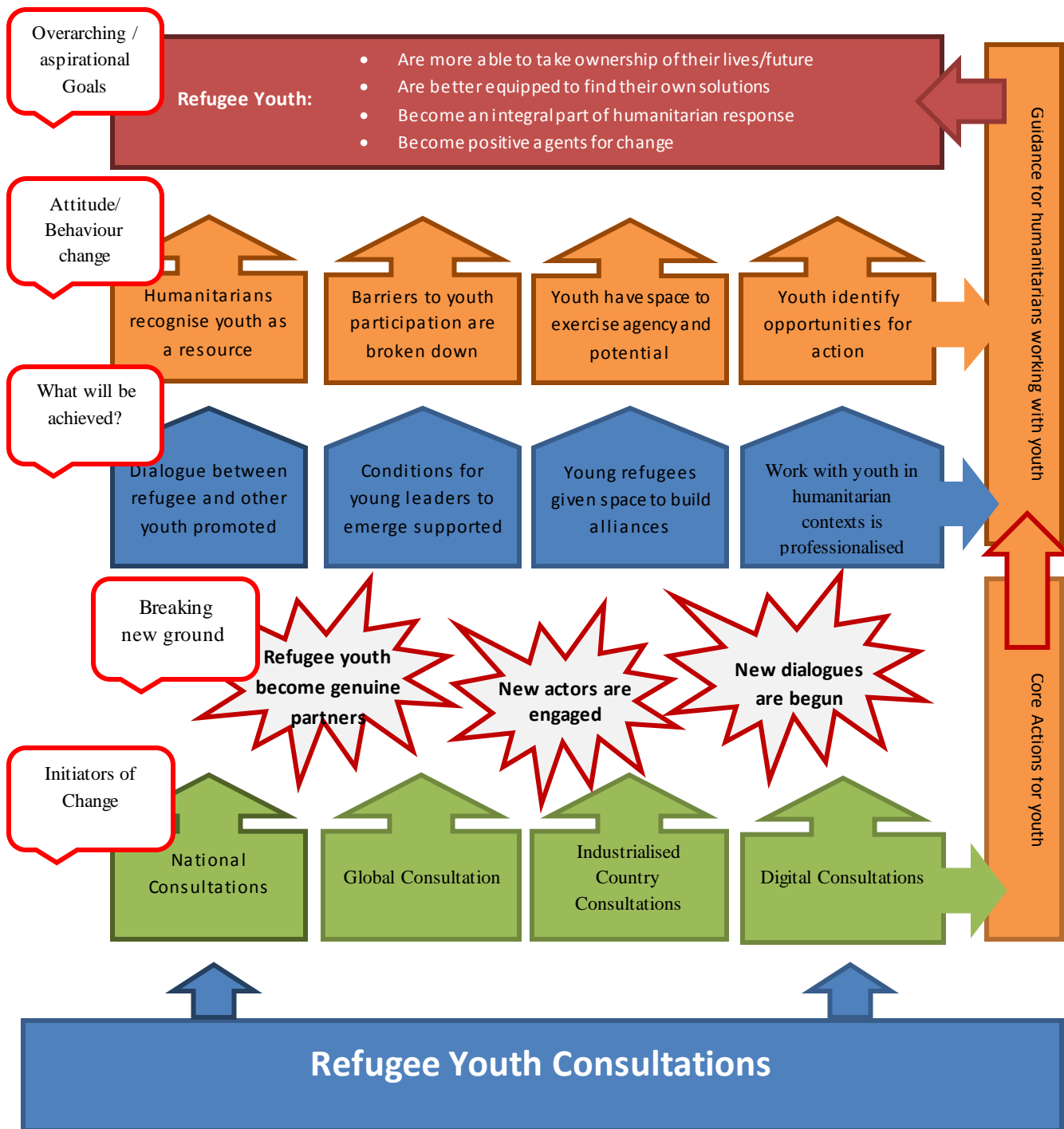
¹² <http://www.youthpolicy.org/participation/structures/latin-american-youth-forum/>

¹³ The UN defines youth as young men and women aged 15 – 24 years, while recognizing that “the meaning of the term youth varies in different societies around the world”. Adopted by the General Assembly (196) World Programme of Action for youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond <http://goo.gl/Y9y2N>

¹⁴ The Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group is made up of individuals from organisations interested in working towards better outcomes for young people in humanitarian situations. It is currently co-chaired by the Women's Refugee Commission and Settlement Services International (Australia). See: www.yaegroup.org

UNHCR envisage will need to take place as part of the consultations to achieve the overarching goal. Following the theory of change are the immediate objectives, followed by a number of initially envisaged outcomes.

Consultation 'Theory of Change'



Immediate objectives

There are four immediate objectives to the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. These are outlined below along with the numerous processes that will help to facilitate each one.

1. Create structured spaces for young refugees to have a voice and engage in participatory dialogue with other youth and relevant stakeholders

- To contribute to sustained dialogue between refugee and host country youth at the local and national level
- To sustain a continuing global and regional dialogue between displaced and refugee youth through the online youth platform

2. Improve access for refugee youth to local, national, regional and global youth alliances and networks

- To provide opportunities for participating refugee youth to build alliances with other youth, youth organisations and other stakeholders;
- To provide opportunities for refugee youth to build alliances with and participate in national, regional and global youth forums and networks.

3. Foster and support participation, leadership and empowerment opportunities for refugee youth

- To foster opportunities for refugee youth leaders both young men and young women to emerge;
- To provide opportunities for refugee youth leaders to participate in national, regional and global youth fora;
- Provide opportunities for participation in the 2016 annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations.

4. Consolidate and channel the learning from the consultations into the development of guidelines and policy recommendations on youth-inclusive programming, to improve the humanitarian sector's understanding of, and work with, refugee youth

- by gathering the views, recommendations, aspirations and visions of refugee and displaced youth;
- Through identifying gaps, needs and good practices in existing humanitarian policies and programmes
- Through providing opportunities for refugee youth to contribute on an ongoing basis to the development of policies and guidance on youth-inclusive programming in humanitarian situations

Outcomes:

The outcomes of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations can be separated into two categories: those that are certain outcomes of the process; and those that we hope to achieve and will work with and support the refugee youth to realize.

UNHCR and WRC expect to achieve the following five outcomes:

- The Identification and documenting of '*Core Actions for Refugee Youth*' that the young participants have identified as priorities for adolescents and youth in humanitarian contexts;
- Ideas and inputs that will contribute towards the development of policies and guidance on youth-inclusive programming in humanitarian contexts. The development of guidance and policies will be led by the YAE Group with an established process for continuing input by refugee and displaced youth (e.g. through a refugee youth body and through refugee youth leaders who emerge from the Global Refugee Youth Consultations);
- Participation of refugee youth leaders in the 2016 annual UNHCR – NGO Consultations focusing on Youth and Adolescents;
- A document that outlines the findings of the consultations and Core Actions for Refugee Youth that will be presented to the UNHCR Executive Committee by young refugees in October 2016;
- A film of the Global Youth Consultations in which youth voices are heard throughout the process.

UNHCR and WRC will also encourage and support refugee youth participants to achieve the second set of outcomes which include:

- Young refugees emerge as leaders;
- Dialogue is sustained between refugee and national youth at national, regional and global levels, both online and in person;
- Refugee youth are represented and participate in national, regional and global youth bodies, forums, networks and consultations;
- Youth are meaningfully included in UNHCR, INGO and NGO decision-making and consultative processes.

How do we achieve this?

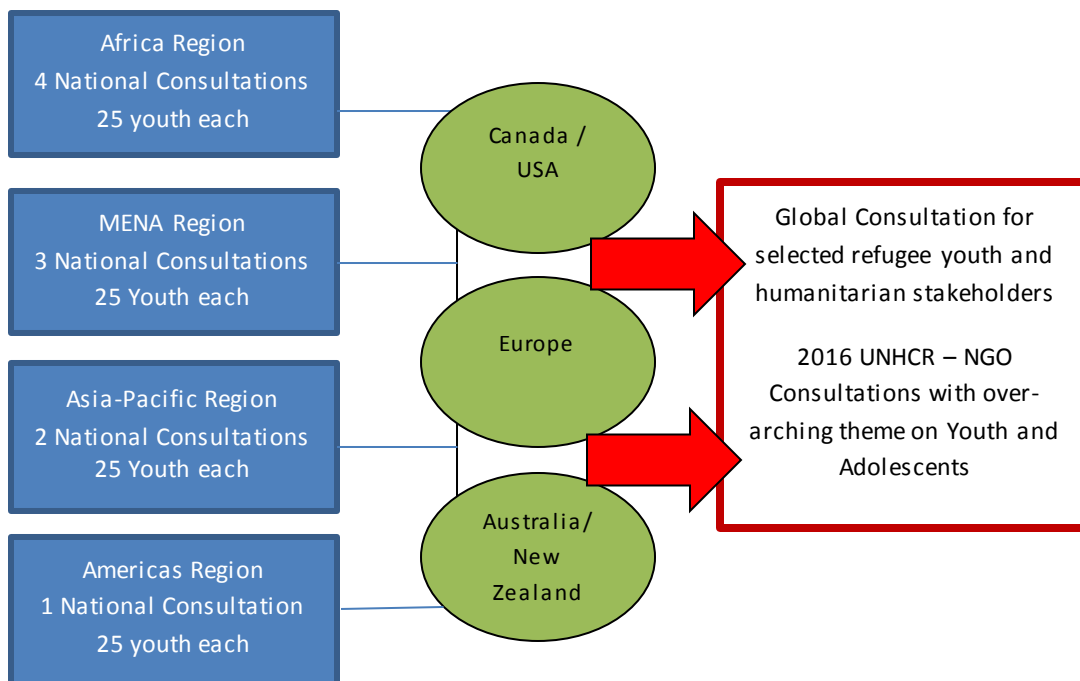
The Global Refugee Youth Consultations will be held over 15 months between July 2015 and October 2016. They will consist of a series of ten National Consultations and one Global Consultation. The National Consultations will take place across four regions, with 4 consultations in Africa¹⁵, 3 in the

¹⁵ The first National Consultations was held in Uganda in November 2015. An additional 3 Consultations are planned in Kenya, Western Africa and Southern Africa in 2016.

Middle East and North Africa¹⁶, two in Asia-Pacific¹⁷ and one in the Americas¹⁸. In addition to this, parallel consultations will be held with refugee youth in North America, Australasia and Europe. These parallel consultations will be led and funded independently by regional and local NGOs, but will contribute to the overall findings. A toolkit will be developed to guide consultations in industrialized countries, as well as in any additional countries wishing to hold refugee youth consultations. The toolkit will ensure that parallel consultations follow a similar approach to that taken in the ten National Consultations and that the information gathered will be comparable. These in-person consultations will be complemented by a global virtual dialogue where young refugees will have the opportunity to interact and share their thoughts and ideas through social media platforms.

The National Consultations will be followed by a three-day Global Consultation in Geneva prior to the 2016 annual UNHCR- NGO Consultations. At the Global Consultation, selected refugee youth representatives from the National Consultations will come together to discuss and consolidate findings from each of the National Consultations, finalize a set of **Core Actions for Refugee Youth** and present their recommendations to stakeholders. They will also participate as speakers and moderators during sessions of the 2016 UNHCR – NGO Consultations.

Global Refugee Youth Consultation Structure



¹⁶ National Consultations were held in Jordan and Morocco in December 2015 and January 2016 respectively. A third consultation will be held in the MENA region in 2016.

¹⁷ National Consultations will be held in Pakistan and Indonesia in 2016.

¹⁸ The National Consultation will be held in Ecuador in 2016.

National Consultations

Each National Consultation will take place over four days, with another two days preparation with local facilitators, interpreters, Lead National NGO, UNHCR Country Office, Advisory Committee Regional Lead and the GRYC project team. The first three days will be a journey of dialogue and discussion that builds trust and relationships identifies challenges faced by youth, including their root causes and impacts, as well as solutions. Participants will identify their role in implementing solutions and who they need to partner with to realise their solutions. Twenty refugee youth and five host country youth (including representatives from national youth organizations and national youth activists) will be selected for each National Consultation. On the fourth day there will be the opportunity for participants to present their findings and recommendations to a group of invited stakeholders (Please see stakeholders dialogue below). The National Consultation will provide the space and opportunities for the participants to engage in constructive dialogue, network and build alliances and encourage the emergence of youth capacities, capabilities and leaders. By the end of each National Consultation participants will have identified a number of key areas of concern for further discussion at the global level. Two youth representatives from each National Consultation will be selected to participate in the Global Consultation and 2016 annual UNHCR – NGO Consultations (one refugee and one host country national youth).

Stakeholder Dialogue

A half-day (2-3 hours) Stakeholder Dialogue will be held on the final morning of each National Consultation. Representatives from relevant national Government Ministries (e.g. Ministry for Youth Affairs; Ministry for Social Welfare; Ministry responsible for refugee affairs; Education Ministry) humanitarian organizations (e.g. UNHCR, NGOs and other UN agencies), national youth organizations/ Youth Councils and prominent youth activists will be invited to attend.

Global Consultation

Two representatives from each National Consultation (one refugee and one host country national youth) will be selected to travel to Geneva to attend the Global Consultation and the 2016 annual UNHCR–NGO Consultations in June 2016 (a total of 20 youth representatives).¹⁹ An additional, 10 refugee youth representatives will also be selected from the consultations in Europe, North America and Australasia. During the Global Consultation participants will present, discuss, synthesise and consolidate the findings from the National Consultations. It will be an opportunity to agree on the main messages that will be presented through the final report and to discuss how the dialogue will continue at the national, regional and global levels. The Global Consultation will also provide space for refugee youth leaders to present the outcomes of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations to representatives from UNHCR, the YAE Group, humanitarian NGOs and government missions. During the Global Consultation four youth

¹⁹ The process for selecting youth representatives will be administered by the Lead National NGO, the Advisory Committee Regional Lead and the UNHCR Country Office in each country (see below for more details).

representatives will be selected to return to Geneva to present the final report at the annual meeting of UNHCR's Executive Committee in October 2016.

Virtual Dialogues

To complement and strengthen the “in-person consultations”, young refugees will have the opportunity to interact and share their thoughts and ideas through social media platforms in a “global virtual dialogue”

This virtual dialogue will follow on from similar initiatives such as TakingITGlobal – a global, online youth organization linked to Global Youth Action Network²⁰; and Voices of Youth – a UNICEF online youth platform²¹.

Young refugees will be given the opportunity to share thoughts on themes and ideas in the lead up to the global consultation in June 2016. After consultation with youth on their preferred platform Facebook is the one that has been selected to be utilised for the virtual dialogues.

Inclusive and Representative

The consultations will be as inclusive and representative as possible. UNHCR's Age Gender and Diversity policy²² will be the bench mark for ensuring the process is gender balanced, representative across the age range of youth (15 – 24 year olds), inclusive of differently-abled young people, young people with different educational and skills levels and young people from social, ethnic, sexual and religious minorities). The consultations will aim to reflect the views of refugee youth in urban, as well as rural areas; and in camps as well as those who are self-settled. Efforts will be taken to include refugee youth in recent, sudden on-set emergencies; as well as those in more long-term, protracted situations.

The consultation process

The Global Refugee Youth Consultations were launched at the 2015 annual UNHCR – NGO Consultations in Geneva between 1 and 3 July 2015. Planning for the Global Refugee Youth Consultations took place between July and October 2015. This included the recruitment of a Coordinator and Project Officer to implement the project; the development of a participatory approach using a range of different tools; a youth-led pilot testing of the tools with refugee and asylum seeking youth in Malta in October 2015; the development of all the required process documentation including TORs, forms, policies and guidelines for all aspects of the National Consultations; the formation of, and consultation with, an Advisory Committee to help guide the process and finally the development of a toolkit for parallel consultations. The first National Consultations took place in Uganda between the 10 and 13 November and Jordan between the 7th and 10th December 2015. The third consultation is scheduled to take place in Morocco between the 18th and 22nd January 2016. The remaining 7 consultations will take place between February and May 2016. A summary report will be prepared after each National Consultation and work on consolidating the findings will start following the final consultation at the beginning of May. The final

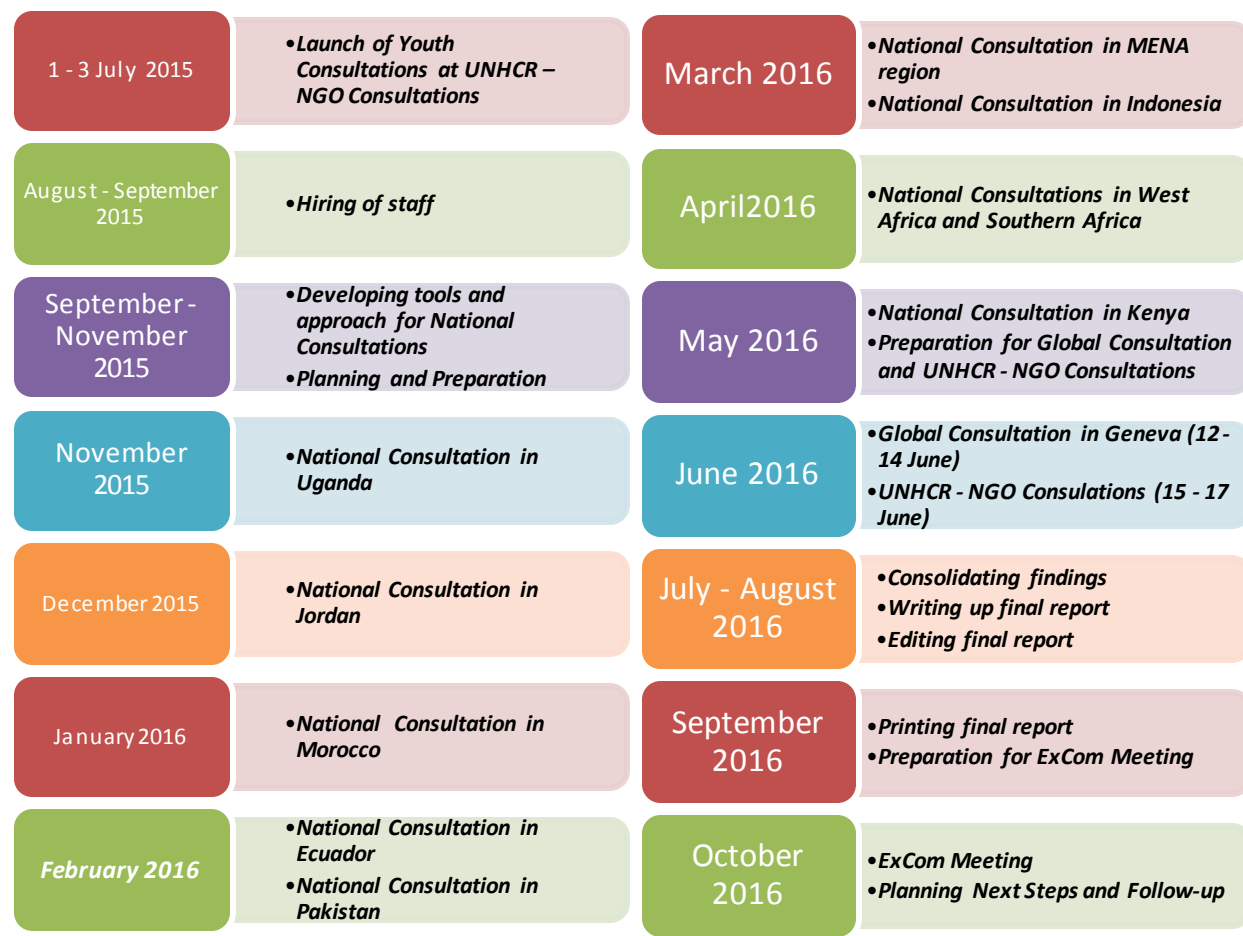
²⁰ <https://www.tigweb.org/>

²¹ <http://www.voicesofyouth.org/>

²² For Information on UNHCR AGD approach please see: <http://www.unhcr.org/4fedc29d9.pdf>

report will be written between July and September 2016 in time to be presented at the annual meeting of UNHCR’s Executive Committee in October 2016.

Visual representation of the Global Refugee Consultation Process:



Who Will be Involved?

The overall process is being led by UNHCR and the Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC)²³. WRC and UNHCR staff conceptualised and initiated the project, however, a number of other organisations and individuals will be involved in the implementation of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations.

²³ UNHCR and WRC also collaborated on the organization of the Dialogues with Refugee Women in 2001 see [http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=3bb44d908&query=refugee women](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=3bb44d908&query=refugee%20women)

A full-time Coordinator has been hired to manage much of the process going forward and will be assisted by a Project Officer. The Coordinator and Project Officer are working in close collaboration with UNHCR and WRC staff and an Advisory Committee throughout the project. They are also working directly with National NGO Lead organisations, the Regional INGO Leads and the UNHCR offices in each country/location.

National NGO Leads

The National Consultations will be organized by a National NGO Lead in each country. The National NGO Lead will where possible be an organization with experience of working on youth issues and an interest in, or experience of, working with refugee youth. Working in close collaboration with the UNHCR Country Office and the Advisory Committee Regional Lead (see below), the National NGO Lead will be responsible for the overall planning and preparation for the National Consultation, including the selection of youth participants, identifying a suitable venue, recruiting facilitators and interpreters and making logistical arrangements for the youth participants.

Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was formed in September 2015 to help guide and support the Global Refugee Youth Consultation process. . The Advisory Committee is made up of the following members:

- UNHCR (Co-Chair)
- Women’s Refugee Commission (Co-Chair)
- 4 Regional Leads (YAE Member Organizations)
 - World Vision (Africa region)
 - Save the Children/Norwegian Refugee Council (MENA region)
 - Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) (Asia Pacific region)
 - The RET (Refugee Education Trust) (Americas)
- YAE Group Co-Chair and Resettlement Countries representative
- 3 Youth Representatives (additional youth representatives may join the Advisory Committee as the National Consultations get under way)
- National NGO Representatives (to be confirmed once National Consultations get under way)
- Independent Youth Expert

The Advisory Committee has agreed to meet regularly throughout the process to review documents, provide input and advice. The Advisory Committee Regional Leads will play a critical role in supporting the National Consultations in their region, alongside the National NGO Lead and UNHCR Country Office. The Youth Representatives will serve as facilitators for the Global Consultation in Geneva in June 2016. A member of the Advisory Committee (either the Regional Lead, or other) will be present at every National Consultation.

Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE Group)

The Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE Group) is made up of individuals from humanitarian organisations working for better outcomes for young people in humanitarian situations.

The YAE Group is co-led by the Women's Refugee Commission and Settlement Services International. Along with UNHCR and WRC, YAE group members will disseminate information about the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. This will include outreach to interested local/ national and regional NGOs; information sharing about the Consultations; feedback on outcomes of the Consultations; and planning next steps. A YAE Group website has been established to assist in the dissemination and sharing of information, networking and gathering feedback²⁴. The YAE Group will ensure that processes are in place for the information that comes from the Global Refugee Youth Consultations to feed into the development of guidance and policy recommendations for youth led and youth inclusive programming in humanitarian contexts.

Staffing

Two dedicated project staff – a Coordinator and Project Officer have been brought on board to manage the coordination, planning and logistical elements of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations.

Coordinator:

A full time Coordinator was hired in September 2015 to manage the consultation process. The Coordinator works closely with UNHCR, WRC and the Advisory Committee and is responsible for the overall conception, planning, preparation, facilitation and coordination. The Coordinator is responsible for the content of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations and providing practical, substantive and methodological guidance to the National NGO leads. As well as developing the content, the Coordinator will also develop a toolkit to be used in parallel consultations in resettlement and other countries.. The Coordinator is also responsible for planning and facilitating the Global Consultation, collating the data, writing the final report and formulating ideas for next steps and follow-up, in consultation with UNHCR, WRC and the Advisory Committee.

Project Officer:

A full-time Project Officer will support the project for a 9 month period (October 2015 – June 2016) to assist the Coordinator in planning the National Consultations, liaising with the Lead National NGO and overseeing the logistical arrangements for the National Consultations. She will also be the lead rapporteur/ note-taker for each National Consultation to ensure consistency in the note-taking and reporting across the consultations. The Project Officer will assist in the logistical arrangements for the travel of young people to Geneva in June 2016 and will help organize the Global Consultation and youth participation in the annual UNHCR – NGO Consultations.

UNHCR Staff Support:

UNHCR's Adolescent and Youth Officer in Geneva will be the focal point for UNHCR's involvement in the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. He will work closely with WRC, the project staff and the Advisory Committee to support the planning and execution of the National Consultations and plan for the Global Consultation and youth participation in the 2016 UNHCR – NGO Consultations. UNHCR staff will provide further advice and support to the consultations at HQ level in Geneva, as well as providing support to the National Consultations through UNHCR country offices.

²⁴ See www.yaegroup.org

WRC Staff Support:

WRC's Geneva Representative will be the focal point for the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. She will work closely with UNHCR, the project staff and the Advisory Committee to support the planning and execution of the National Consultations and plan for the Global Consultation and youth participation in the 2016 UNHCR – NGO Consultations. In addition, WRC staff in New York will provide administrative, financial and legal support to the project and manage the project funds and financial reporting.

Video and Photograph production

The GRYC project will be documented through the use of video and photographs. A short film of the process and the views of youth participants will be developed along with a photographic display that can be presented at the global consultation and UNHCR annual NGO Consultations. Video and photographs will be captured during each National Consultation and the global consultation. The video and photographs captured will be edited and used to develop the final products by a professional editor. The final products will be developed in line with the overall vision and disseminated using the agreed mediums including at the October 2016 Executive Committee meeting.