

NGO Consultations 2016 – Youth

Session: Youth and integration: building bridges and communities

Integration is a concept that is understood differently in different contexts. However, it is generally agreed that it is a multi-dimensional, long-term, two-way process of mutual adaptation by newcomers and the host society. With their unique perspectives, skills and resources youth have an important role to play in this process. However, too often the views of youth are overlooked. To attain successful integration, we need to nurture, channel and incorporate the perspectives of youth. This entails both recognizing the trauma of past experiences and the particular challenges youth may face in their host society, but also the strength and resilience they bring, and the incredible potential they have to contribute to the social and economic future of their host countries. To do so, we must engage youth in the conversation and in finding solutions, for themselves and their communities.

In this session “Youth and Integration” the panel is made up exclusively of refugee and stateless youth speakers. These panelists will speak from their own experiences about what successful integration looks like to them, and some the barriers and challenges they may have faced along the way. They will also be highlighting the unique qualities that youth bring and discuss how other actors such as governments, NGO’s and civil society can best support them. Providing examples of good practice and testimony from youth and people working with youth, this session will explore what positive integration of displaced youth looks like and showcase the exceptional contribution young people can have despite the disruption of displacement.

Recognizing the individual roles we all have to play in integration, this session will also lead participants to positive action through a group based exploration on how to best build on and support the resources, skills and capacities of youth. Participants will be called on to identify, share and promote practical actions that they will do to support young people and youth integration.

In brief this lively session will provide a platform to:

- Discuss how best to build on and support the resources, skills and capacities of youth to promote integration of their communities.
- Identify good practice processes, policies and programs
- Provide recommendations to UNHCR, NGO/civil society and governments
- Identify and promote practical actions that support youth integration

The over-arching themes for the session are that youth have an important part to play in integration and that we all have a role in helping make this happen.