Youth Peacebuilding in the Middle East: Considerations to Support Research and Empowerment through Education

Submitted by Janette Neumann and Romi Viana

Claremont Graduate University
YOUTH PEACEBUILDING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Abstract

This proposal highlights issues related to existing research and practices and provides a transdisciplinary approach to youth peacebuilding in the Middle East. This paper promotes the “think globally and act locally” approach in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on peaceful and inclusive societies and gender equality. It delves into recent regional case studies and U.N. reports of youth peacebuilding initiatives and compares these to what has been collected from women’s global peacebuilding efforts.

The purpose of the paper is to create linkages and insights into what education and research is still needed and provide recommendations to better support current and future youth peacebuilding efforts. U.N. resolutions (SCR2249 and SCR2419) on the subject of youth peacebuilding demonstrate the direction the U.N. wants the world to take to curb radicalism, promote inclusivity, and create lasting peace in areas of conflict. International efforts committing to empowering women and youth remains a top priority to meet U.N. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, creating safe and secure communities. Research shows embracing the voices of women can advance and create lasting peace. Involving women and youth as peacebuilders is integral for effective intercultural and interfaith peace processes. How to prepare youth to do this work is therefore paramount. We wish to consider the study of best practices to be part of any youth peacebuilding program. We also wish to promote the creation of a conceptual framework to inform choices youth peace leaders must make to promote peace back in their communities.
YOUTH PEACEBUILDING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Taking into account the work of Thania Paffenholz and colleagues in an on-going multi-year research project titled *Broadening Participation in Political Negotiations and Implementation*, researchers will highlight the roles, factors, and modalities that women have used to create peace. We will consider interlinkages between women’s and youth peacebuilding to highlight how these connections might strengthen youth peacebuilding education and research.

Can youth peacebuilding efforts in the Middle East learn from Paffenholz’s work? How can the work of one marginalized group of people (women) help to leverage peacebuilding efforts of another (youth)? What other factors must be considered to fully understand what youth need to be effective peacebuilders? Lastly, what implications exist for how to educate and promote youth peacebuilding?