



## GLOBAL YOUTH RELIGION AND MEDIATION COURSE

# Challenges Faced by Young Faith-Based Mediators

### Adultcentrism

Conflicting parties and societies at large hold the bias that young people lack the expertise and experience to be peace mediators.

### Lack of Trust

There is a lack of trust and suspicion of young people in being seen as the source of the problem within the conflict instead of as potential agents of positive change. This is also fueled by high levels of misinformation and fake news against the work of young faith-based mediators.

### Political Interference & Censorship

In addition to not receiving invitations to take the lead or participate within formal mediation processes, young faith-based mediators face political interference and censorship in their broader peace mediation efforts, including having their mediation processes hijacked by more established actors and entities within the field.

### Gender Bias

In addition to bias against age, there is also double discrimination facing young women faith-based mediators because of their gender, including possible acts of violence being perpetrated against them in their efforts to be or become peace mediators.

### Lack of Funding & Broader Support

There is a lack of independent funding, resources and broader support specifically supporting young faith-based peace mediators.

# Areas of Support Identified by Young Faith-Based Mediators

### Capacity-Building & -Sharing

More capacity-building and training is needed for young faith-based mediators, including providing opportunities for them to share their experiences and work together and opportunities for peer to peer support. These training opportunities provide credibility and opportunity for young faith-based mediators to lead and participate in peace mediation processes.

### Data Collection

Success stories and stories of positive change by faith-based mediators need to be documented, including best practices and lessons learned in order to analyze their impact.

### Advocacy Opportunities & Access to Policymakers

Success stories and stories of positive change based on the work of youth faith-based mediators need to be advocated to the international community to show youth can and are leading and contributing to peace mediation work. This requires more opportunities to engage with policymakers.

### Mentorship & Networking

Mentorship and opportunities to network with other international and regional-based organizations is needed to help connect and build the confidence of young faith-based mediators.

### Independent Funding

Additional opportunities are required for securing funding and resources to bolster the efforts of faith-based mediators, including access to small grants. It's imperative that this funding is both independent and adaptable to mitigate any concerns or misunderstandings about the perception of youth faith-based mediators receiving support from Western donors with a potentially foreign-oriented agenda.

### Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

Access to mental health and psychosocial support is critically needed by young faith-based mediators based on the work that they do and their exposure to individual and collective trauma within society.

### Access to Peace Education in School Curricula

Peace education should be integrated into the formal school curriculum in order to inspire more youth to become young peacebuilders within their community and to promote broader social cohesion and mutual understanding.