



# UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION *of the United States of America*

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## A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION

UN Human Rights Council Resolution 35/14: Youth and Human rights

“Call for Input: OHCHR study on youth and human rights”

**Submission from UNA-USA: January 12, 2018**

### **Background**

- A) The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), a program of the UN Foundation, is a membership organization dedicated to informing, inspiring and mobilizing the American people to support the ideals and vital work of the United Nations. For over 70 years, UNA-USA has worked to accomplish its mission through its national network of chapters, youth engagement, advocacy efforts, education programs, and public events. Independent from the U.S. government, UNA-USA and its sister organization the Better World Campaign represent the single largest network of advocates and supporters of the United Nations in the world.

### **Methodology**

- A) UNA-USA compiled this synthesis following a nationwide consultation with youth and others on January 10, 2018. Participants joined the consultation via conference call from locations in the United States including California, Connecticut, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York. Contributors were asked to share their direct, firsthand experiences. A rapporteur was present on the call to record, consolidate, and synthesize output from the discussion.

### **Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations**

- *Challenges faced by young people in your country and examples of discrimination against young people in the exercise of their rights.*
  - A) Lack of affordable housing for young people enrolled in college or in other educational programs is commonly a challenge, particularly in the western region of the United States.
  - B) Bullying of U.S. youth in schools and other locations, in many cases by other youth, is a pervasive challenge. Bullying infringes on the right to life, right to physical and mental wellbeing, and can contribute to homelessness and suicide. Those facing disproportionate rates of bullying include racial and ethnic minorities as well as individuals that are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex (LGBTI), among others.
  - C) The need for an expansion of accessible channels for youth to substantively engage local and national decision makers, beyond social media.
  - D) Access to critical learning tools and technology (e.g. computers and Internet access) across educational institutions remains uneven.

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- *Are you aware of policies and programmes aimed at supporting young people to realise their rights? If so, please describe them?*
  - A) Sports organizations and sports leadership programs were mentioned as key entry points to raise awareness on the prevention of bullying as well as raising awareness about combating discrimination.
  - B) Youth-focused organizations and structures implementing programs relevant to youth empowerment include Big Brothers/Sisters, Girl Scouts, Girl Up, Girls on the Run, NewFlex Youth, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, and the UNA-USA GenUN network, among others.
  - C) “Rent stabilization” policies have been used with success in some areas to make housing more affordable for youth and other populations.
  
- *How are youth organisations or youth-led structures involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating policies and programmes on youth in your country?*
  - A) Certain college training and leadership programs include trainings for youth leaders focused on raising awareness about the need to proactively combat discrimination and bullying.
  - B) One “English as a Second Language” (ESL) program integrates a cultural-exchange component to ensure youth learning English have an opportunity to express and share their culture and traditions with others.
  
- *What measures at international level would facilitate/support the realisation of young people’s rights?*
  - A) More countries should consider adding youth delegates or observers to the UN and other international forums.
  - B) More educational materials that raise awareness on and understanding of human rights should be produced that are accessible to youth as well as educational institutions. These materials should also include best practices for youth to engage the UN human rights system.
  - C) Efforts to support the realization of the rights of young people should go beyond big cities and high-density population areas.
  
- *Any other issue you would like to share with OHCHR?*
  - A) National statistical offices and third-party data experts should work to disaggregate data related to the fulfillment of human rights commitments and the sustainable development goals in order to ensure that the specific particular challenges youth face in this regard are properly understood.
  - B) The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues provides a key platform for indigenous youth in the U.S. to connect to the UN.