Annual Evaluation
Fiscal Year 20

Key Findings

Updated October, 2020
Peace First helps youth ages 13-25 change the world for the better. Our innovative digital platform takes youth on a step-by-step journey to create their own social action projects and provides design tools, mini-grants, mentorship and a community of youth collaborators to help them deepen and grow their ideas. Young people from over 140 countries have joined our community, launching over 7,000 projects, tackling everything from climate change to community violence, from education access to women’s rights.

Fiscal Year 20: A Big Bet and Global Expansion

In August 2020, we launched a first of its kind Fellowship that embodies our values to build the next generation of young social change catalyzers who lead by empowering others to make change. Our Fellow-in-Residence program has transformed how we deliver our program, deepened youth leadership within Peace First and added global expertise to our team. Our inaugural cohort of Fellows, based around the globe, have mobilized and supported youth-led projects, enabling us to grow our reach significantly from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020 and vastly expanding our global footprint. Our Fellows lead our support to projects across Asia/Oceania, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, the UK/Europe and the US/Canada.
About the Evaluation

- Covers programs implemented July 1, 2019 to June 30th, 2020 (Fiscal Year 20)

- Quantitative data sources include online “End of Year” Survey of participants at various stages of their project journey and online platform data. We received 303 survey responses. Demographic, user satisfaction and outcomes for young people in this report are based on data from survey respondents (with the exception of age and country location data, which is based on all projects.)

- Qualitative data sources include open-ended questions on the “End of Year” Survey, project reflections submitted by young people with their own analysis of project impact and semi-structured interviews conducted during previous evaluation processes this year.

- Analysis also draws on data and insights from other evaluation processes during Fiscal Year 20.

“End of Year” survey was sent to a sample of project creators in an effort to ensure survey respondents were representative of the regional breakdown of projects created during this year. This process resulted in a fairly representative group of survey responses by region, though some regions are slightly underrepresented or over represented.
Fiscal Year 20 Highlights

A year of strong growth and expansion of our global reach: Peace First supported 3,517 projects in 113 countries, nearly doubling the number of projects created in the previous year. We distributed nearly 500 mini-grants, placing $119,000 directly in the hands of young people to implement their projects.

Young people at all project stages report transformative impact: enhanced agency, courage, compassion, and a deeper commitment to social action.

Young people’s projects impacted their communities in a variety of ways, from enhancing awareness about key issues and deepening community dialogue to policy shifts. Completed projects collectively impacted over 300,000 individuals.
More projects were created this year than in the last two years combined.

We disbursed 360% more mini-grants compared to last year.
Our Reach as of June 30, 2020

New Countries in FY20

- Brazil
- Sri Lanka
- Canada
- Dominican Republic
- France
- Venezuela
- Madagascar
- Iceland
- Ecuador
- Chile
- United Arab Emirates
- Greece
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Germany
- Nicaragua
- Vietnam
- Indonesia
- Serbia
- Ireland
- Malta
- Guyana
- Peru
- Kuwait
- Turkey
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Hungary
- Kosovo
- Netherlands
- Austria
- Denmark
- Portugal
- Macedonia
- Jamaica
- Paraguay
- Uruguay
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Iran
- Qatar
- Oman
- Cote d'Ivoire
Our Community: Demographics, Lived Experiences, and Exploring Accessibility
Young people in 113 countries created projects during FY20.

38 native languages are represented

- Most common primary languages are English (43.89%), Arabic (19.14%), Nepali (5.61%), Swahili (5.28%), Spanish (4.29%) and Portuguese (4.29%)

Young people self-identify as being part of 76 unique ethnic identities.

Globally, there is balance between female (50.5%) and male (47%) participants, with a small minority of respondents who identify as genderqueer, gender fluid, or non-binary.

Although young people at every age of our age range (13-25) created projects this year, 2 out of 3 were age 21 and up. Latin America and US/Canada have larger representation of young people ages 18 and under than other regions.

Map represents cumulative projects as of June 30, 2020.
Word of mouth is now our largest source of recruitment, indicating the power of peer-to-peer recruitment. We plan to build on this through our Ambassador program, which will train young people to serve as leaders in our community and mobilize their peers.

The top 3 reasons to join globally are
- to solve an injustice,
- promote sustainable development,
- be part of a global community of people creating change

The only exception is US/Canada, where the top reason to join was to be eligible for $250 mini-grant, followed by solving an injustice and promoting sustainable development.
Most respondents have experienced unequal access to opportunities based on power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions.

Young people shared that they have experienced discrimination or difficulty accessing opportunities based on their:
- socioeconomic status (35%)
- race/ethnicity/nationality/indigenous background and/or discrimination based on country of origin (35%)
- education level (32%)
- gender identity (19.7%)
- Religious background (15%)
- Sexuality (10.4%)
- Neighborhood (10%)
- Immigration status (6.8%)
- Disability (2.9%)
- Other reasons (4.3%) including political background.

Lived Experience of Discrimination and Barriers

- Have experienced discrimination or difficulty accessing opportunities/resources based on who they are, how they identify, or how others view them.
- Have not faced discrimination in accessing opportunities
- Prefer not to answer
82% of survey respondents reported having experienced one or more on a list of common barriers, with economic barriers being especially common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to access financial resources</td>
<td>45.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>44.09%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>41.58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access technology</td>
<td>29.39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community violence and/or war</td>
<td>29.03%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access health services</td>
<td>28.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access education</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers accessing clean water/air, environmental</td>
<td>22.58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access housing</td>
<td>19.71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access sexual/reproductive health services or</td>
<td>16.49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers to access food</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental neglect</td>
<td>13.62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>7.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>5.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
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</tbody>
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Accessibility – Where we are doing well

- Our program is reaching and effectively serving young people of diverse identities and backgrounds. There is no significant difference in outcomes or satisfaction with the program between young people who have experienced barriers and those who have not.

- Mini-grants are meeting the goal of lowering barriers for young people to participate in peacemaking. Globally, 62% of young people reported that the grant makes a “significant difference” to their ability to carry out the project as planned, with an additional 20% saying they “would not be able to carry out the project without the grant.”
Accessibility – Where we can continue to improve

- **Broadening recruitment and partnerships to reach more young people:** Young people shared that Peace First could better reach marginalized young people through expanding outreach, targeted recruitment, and partnerships to ensure more young people are aware of the opportunity. This includes additional outreach with young people on the lower end of our age spectrum.

- **Continue to grow and diversify our team and programs:** Young people suggest that Peace First work to expand the size and diversity of its team so that they can receive support from people with local expertise. Some young people also highlighted the need to pay attention to intercultural competency in the references we make in our materials and communications.

- **Storytelling & Communications:** Young people recommend amplifying our storytelling and communications functions globally and using storytelling both to help promote young people’s projects and to encourage other young people through stories of what is possible.

- **Changes to digital platform to improve accessibility** such as improving the multilingual experience and expanding to new languages, and improving the accessibility for individuals with disabilities and with poor internet access. Young people also spoke to a fundamental challenge for us as a digital organization: that many young people in marginalized communities do not have access to the technology required to participate.
Participant Satisfaction, Supports & Tools
“I enjoyed reading other stories from Peacemakers from across the globe who are tackling injustices, in light of / or despite of COVID-19, it has felt like being part of a wide and powerful network - which is truly inspiring. It was great to see all the extra support available and that there is a team member always readily available online, something that is quite rare with other youth social action funding orgs . . .

Although everything to do with the project planning and support from Peace First was online - it did not reduce the quality, if anything, the support has exceeded physical training sessions run by other orgs that provide young people with funding.”

- Young Person, United Kingdom
Young people had a positive experience

4.1 Global average rating

General User Satisfaction
- 94% rate their overall experience as Good (18%), Very Good (37%) or Excellent (39%)
- 91% are Very (30%) or Extremely Likely (61%) to say that Peace First is an organization they trust.
- 91% are Very Likely (32%) or Extremely Likely (59%) to recommend Peace First to a peer.

“The three C’s [Peace First’s values of Courage, Compassion, and Collaboration] have been an awesome guide. The support and feedback during the application process. The mentorship call. This being my first grant, I feel like my work has been trusted. This gives me confidence to continue making a difference in my community.” Young Person, Uganda

4.3 Global average rating

Feedback
- 99% of respondents who have submitted a compassionate insight and received feedback from our Fellows-in-Residence found the feedback helpful:
  - 45% found it Extremely Helpful
  - 41% found it Very Helpful
  - 12% Moderately Helpful
  - 1% Slightly Helpful
What Young People Value Most about our Program

- **Feedback & Peer Mentorship from Fellows-in-Residence**: Young people appreciate receiving feedback from peers that helps them go deeper while ensuring they maintain ownership over the project.

  “Getting guidance and support from young people happens to be the best thing I experienced, this motivated me to do more, learn from them and grow with them.”
  Young Person, Nigeria

- **Peacemaking journey: Project structure, virtual experience, and tools** Young people appreciate the logic, structure, and tools of the project journey that supports them in planning their project.

  “[The process] encouraged me to think through the impact of my project, how i was going to use funding, and the steps I needed to carry out.”
  Young Person, USA

- **Mini-Grants** are key to young people’s ability to carry out projects.

  “Initially, funding was posing as a big challenge until Peace First assisted with mini-grant which went a long way.”
  Young Person, Nigeria

- **Trust & Care** provided by the Peace First team.

  “I love the fact that Peace First believes in young people even when they don’t have any prior experience in implementing projects in the community. It greatly encourages us to keep impacting lives.”
  Young Person, Nigeria

- **Opportunities to build community and networks**

  “Interacting with other peacemakers and being exposed to a community who is passionate about social change.”
  Young Person, United Kingdom
Outcomes & Impact
I. Individual Change

Young people make direct gains in agency, compassion, courage, collaboration, and other necessary skills and mindsets. They also develop their leadership and tangible skills to enable them to continue to act as change agents. We measure this through surveys, interviews, and learnings young people share in their final reports.

II. Community Change

Projects have a direct, tangible impact on young people’s communities. Every project is unique: young people are supported to tackle any injustice in their community that is important to them. Our understanding of community impact is rooted in young people’s experiences and observations of how their projects have changed their communities, which they share in surveys as well as their final project reports.

III. Narrative and Culture Change

Through strategic storytelling, our long-term goal is to change narratives about young people as naive, misunderstood service recipients who need to undergo behavioural change in order to fit into an adult world. In the short-term, we track young people’s experiences of how their leadership is perceived and media impressions as indicators that the work is helping to position youth leadership.
I. Impact on Young People

92% report a greater confidence in their skills and abilities to create change in their community.

95% are more comfortable speaking out or talking about important issues in their communities.

92% feel more connected to their communities.

*Among survey respondents*
Young people report enhanced collaboration, compassion and commitment to working across lines of difference.

- 93% are more likely to respect and work to understand people who are different from them.
- 96% are more likely to motivate others to partner with them.
- This collaboration is rooted in local communities. A key learning articulated by people is the importance of working closely with individuals experiencing the injustice.
- Globally, 86% of survey respondents built relationships with people who had a different worldview than them.

Young people report growth in their courage, perseverance and resilience.

- 90% are more likely to take action, even if they are afraid of what might happen.
- 95% are more likely to stick with their social change projects, even when things get hard.
- 95% are more likely to stand for someone being affected by an injustice.

“[We learnt about] holding leaders accountable.”
Nelly, Kenya, Age 22

“We learnt how to be flexible and also overcome challenges which we had a lot while planning and executing this project.”
Thompson, Nigeria, Age 20

“I have learnt not to assume about how someone will be based on their history.”
Finn, Northern Ireland, Age 25
What skills did you learn or improve?

- Project Planning (Structuring a plan/setting goals) 60%
- Identifying root causes of problems 55%
- Promoting peace and solve injustices 54%
- Communicating with others about my project/the issue 54%
- Team Work (Working with others) 48%
- Reflecting on my work 43%
- Leadership (Serving as a leader) 43%
- Gathering community perspectives/feedback 42%
- Structuring a budget 40%
- Personal Awareness (Assessing personal development) 39%
- Using technology and online tools 38%
- Promoting sustainable development 35%
- Partnering with adults 23%
- Resolving conflict 23%
- None 3%
II. Community Impact

77% of young people believe their project had a positive impact on their communities or those it was intended to help.

In final reports, young people share their observations and analysis about how their projects have impacted individuals and created change in their communities. Based on these reports, projects from this year have reached 322,734 individuals around the world.
Young people report that their projects are...

Promoting awareness and dialogue about injustices:

● 74% of respondents reported that there is now more community awareness about the issue they are addressing
● 72% report that more people talk about the issue than prior to the intervention

“The social taboos related to menstruation have been in the community through a very long time. So it’s not easy to change these beliefs... However as the result of the project the girls and boys are made aware regarding this topic and they seem to be determined on abolishing the taboos.” Kanchan, Nepal, Age 23

Sparking others to create change and promoting capacity building

● 64% report community members learning new skills
● 60% report that community members have come together to take action on the issue.

“The project allowed people to see that they have a role to play in communities to avert the effects of climate change... Action in [a] small initiative can have great impacts in the way people act. People are now actively engaged in Community work.” Brian, Zimbabwe, Age 25

Resulting in structural changes by decision makers

● 46% report that private or public sector organizations now more regularly consult community voices in decision makers
● 31% reporting that new policies were formally introduced, amended, or blocked.

“The youths started participating in policy making as there was a meeting between the leaders and the youths and I was very happy to see the many youths sharing their grievances without any fear and some of the opinions given by the youths were executed by the leaders and this gave the youths confidence... [They learned] that their opinion in policy making mattered and they have the right to participate.” Duke, Kenya, Age 25
The most common project themes are Education, Good Health & Well-Being and Gender Equality

Youth Activism and Youth Rights is the fourth most common theme globally and is the third most common theme in the USA/Canada, Europe, and MENA, indicating a strong interest in lifting up peers.

The environment is one of the top 5 themes, when combining multiple environmentally related SDGs.

We tag projects based on a list of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals as well as additional cross-cutting themes we have identified.
Good Health and Well-being is the only theme that shows up in the top three in every region, in part reflecting the global nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a growth in projects addressing this theme.
A closer look at our top 3 themes

**Education**
- Projects are working to promote free/equitable/quality education, to update core curriculum, to eliminate disparities, to help achieve literacy and numeracy, and more.
- For example, 7 completed projects addressing literacy & numeracy in Sub-Saharan Africa have reached 4,070 individuals, resulting in more people with access to books, deeper community awareness about importance of literacy and numeracy, and the creation of school book clubs.

**Good Health & Well-Being**
- Projects are working to promote mental health, end AIDS, hepatitis, malaria and other diseases, ensure universal access to sexual & reproductive health, and develop, train and retain health workers.
- For example, 8 completed projects addressing mental disorders and the treatment and promotion of mental health in the MENA region have collectively engaged 1,010 individuals, resulting in more individuals being educated about mental health symptoms and coping mechanisms, more individuals comfortable talking about mental health, and more counseling sessions hosted.

**Gender Equality**
- Projects are working to promote empowerment of women through technology and education, end discrimination, promote equal rights to economic resources, end gender-based violence and more.
- For example, 2 completed projects in Nepal addressing menstruation have engaged 374 individuals, resulting in more individuals who know how to make reusable pads, more people who speak about menstrual health, and individuals receiving menstrual health care packets.
III. Wider Society – Perceptions of Youth Leadership

2 out of 3 young people report being recognized, honored or celebrated by adults as a result of their project.

Young people noted examples of being recognized by communities in general, as well as by powerful institutions and individuals, including the media, universities, healthcare institutions, arts organisations, and government officials and community leaders (members of parliament, village leaders, elders). In some cases young people noted ways in which this enhanced their access to resources or will further enable their changemaking.

40 survey respondents reported receiving media coverage as a result of their projects. (18% of survey respondents and 25% of survey respondents in the Act & Reflect stage)
“They said that we gave them back their faith in youth once again.”
Young Person, Jordan

“During our project implementation, the adults emphasized on the fact that the project was carried out by young people and we were commended for taking an active role to be agents of change in a time such as this.”
Young Person, Zambia

“I was personally selected for a new working group within the Africa CDC as a result of the work on our Peace First project. Additionally, I was selected (as the only young female) to be part of the Universal Health Coverage Network composed of senior high-level representatives from the Africa CDC, African Union, and other top institutions.”
Young Person, UK
In response to Covid-19, Peace First issued a call to action to young people to respond to the secondary effects of Covid-19 on communities around the world. After launching our Rapid Response program, we saw a rapid rise in the number of young people submitting project applications.

Between March 1st and June 30th, our projects grew by 53% and we expanded into 31 new countries.

One in three of all cumulative projects as of June 30th of were created during the last four months of fiscal year 20, as a result of this momentum.
121,926: People impacted through COVID-related interventions

“The greatest success of this project is that parents are learning alongside their children. The second success of the project is the set of books that explain COVID-19 to young children. Another parent commented, ‘it helped me explain what is happening and he just loves the dinosaurs!’ These books will live on beyond this project and can be used to explain to young children how their world has been changed.” – Alexander, United States

Young people have impacted communities in a variety of ways, including:

• providing first aid resources
• emotional support and resources for health workers
• civic involvement opportunities
• isolation & mental health interventions
• educational access
• handwashing resources and COVID general awareness
• food distribution
• personal protective equipment
Key Learnings from Covid-19 Rapid Response work

“I knew I wanted to do something, but until Peace First came out with funding I [had] no idea how I could accomplish my goal.” – Young person, United States

- **Power of a Call to Action:** Our rapid growth in March and April suggests that our call to action and messaging to young people about the urgency of responding to COVID-19 was an effective tool for mobilizing young people. In a survey conducted in April, 40% of respondents shared that they got the idea to start a project related to COVID-19 in response to the call to action, demonstrating the power of issuing a specific call to action on key issues facing our global community.

- **Young people faced extra challenges due to the Covid-19 context, which provided the opportunity to develop new skills.** Young people spoke to the challenges of virtual communication as teams, carrying out programming while following safety guidelines, and data costs as a result programming going online. Despite these obstacles, young people persevered and were able to develop their flexibility and ability to adapt, as well as their digital skills, including virtual facilitation and learning.

- **Importance of community care:** When asked what additional support they needed during Covid-19, the most common themes were capacity building through online trainings/webinars and community support and connection. Fellows-in-Residence began hosting weekly community building calls to respond to both of these needs and they have been well received by our community.
Fellow-in-Residence Program
Fellow-in-Residence Program

Peace First launched its Fellow-in-Residence program early in Fiscal Year 20, with the inaugural team joining at the end of August 2019 and an eighth Fellow joining Spring 2020 due to high demand from projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Fellows have transformed our core programming by bringing region specific insights onto our team, centering peer-to-peer mentorship, and enabling us to reach wider audiences through Labs and partnership development.

Our analysis shows that the experience was also deeply transformative for Fellows. Key areas of growth include leadership development and intercultural competency, with fellows developing the skill to work and communicate with diverse perspectives and with folks from around the world.

Outcomes for Fellows-in-Residence

All 7 fellows report growth in their courage, compassion, and collaboration.

All 7 fellows report greater confidence in their skills and abilities to create change and 6 out of 7 report that they are more effective leaders of social change.

All 7 fellows report greater self-awareness: a deeper understanding of their interests, skills, and what they need to be successful.

In a retrospective pre-post survey, fellows also report improving a wide range of professional skills over the course of the year, including programmatic skills, nonprofit management skills and general skills from communication to event planning and logistics.
Recommendations & Key Takeaways
Opportunities for Improvement

- **Faster response times for feedback, inquiries and mini-grants disbursement:** A number of young people remarked on the need for us to provide feedback more quickly, especially in areas with large demand.

- **Website and project dashboard updates,** including video and documents upload, language accessibility, mobile access, and better signposting to all the resources available.

- **Continue to develop community and skills building opportunities:** Young people are interested in more structured and frequent opportunities to network and connect with each other and additional opportunities to build skills, including monitoring & evaluation and fundraising.

- **Recruitment:** We can grow our community by engaging in additional issue-specific Call to Actions, and through targeted recruitment to address gender imbalance in some regions and bring in young people on the low end of our age range. Our Ambassador program will help us broaden our peer recruitment strategy.
Key Takeaways

- **We grew our reach significantly this year, without sacrificing program quality.** Our Covid-19 Rapid Response program built upon the momentum we already had, enabling us to grow quickly in the last four months of the year. User satisfaction remains high, and more young people are reaching key milestones in the journey. Young people deeply appreciate the feedback and mentorship they receive, the core journey experience and tools, mini-grants, being part of a community and the trust and care our team provide.

- **Our program is deeply impactful for young people in all regions.** Young people report growth in peacemaking skills, including courage, compassion and collaborative leadership and a stronger commitment to making change.

- **Young people are creating positive change in their communities across a wide range of issue areas, with Education, Good Health & Well-being and Gender Equality as the top themes.** Regardless of the issue they are addressing, young people’s projects are enhancing community dialogue and awareness of key issues, sparking others to take action and in some cases resulting in structural changes by decision makers. Indicators suggest that there is potential for wider societal impact by positioning youth leadership.
Key Takeaways

- The inaugural year of our Fellow-in-Residence program has been a big win. Young people deeply appreciate the peer mentorship they receive and it has also been key to our ability to grow and globalize. It has also been deeply impactful for our Fellows.

- Our program is effectively serving a diverse group of young people, including many with personal experiences of injustice. 73% have experienced discrimination or barriers accessing resources based on their identities or life experiences.

- Young people have ideas for how we can further expand accessibility and lower barriers. Mini-grants and other elements of our program help lower barriers to entry, however we can further strengthen accessibility by adapting our recruitment and storytelling strategies, bringing more young people into leadership through our Ambassador program and improving language and disability accessibility on our digital platform.