

UNEG
AGM 2025



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group

Mapping the engagement of young and emerging evaluators in UNEG agencies

UNEG AGM 2025: Reference document

This document has been prepared by the Young and Emerging Evaluators Working Group. It is being circulated for approval for publication as a UNEG Reference Document.

About the UNEG Working Group on Young and Emerging Evaluators

The United Nations recognizes the critical role of young people in shaping a sustainable and equitable future. Established in 2023, the UNEG Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEE) Working Group is an intergenerational working group designed to empower young professional evaluators and amplify their participation in the evaluation processes of the United Nations and beyond. Guided by the UN Secretary General's vision outlined in [Our Common Agenda](#) the subsequent [policy briefs](#) and the [Pact for the Future](#), our Working Group responds to these calls by fostering collaboration between young and senior evaluators to strengthen the evaluation landscape through diversity, innovation, and inclusivity. The working group continues to encourage UN Evaluation Offices to meaningfully engage youth and relevant young stakeholders in their evaluation processes and practice.

Our goals:

1. Enhance awareness of the role and status of Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEEs) within the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) organizations.
2. Advocate for increased learning and career opportunities for YEEs in UN agencies and beyond.
3. Drive meaningful and sustained engagement of YEEs in evaluation processes, ensuring their voices shape the future of evidence-based decision-making.

Our group brings together young professionals and seasoned evaluators to:

- Explore strategies for empowering young evaluators to lead transformative change.
- Share best practices for inclusive and intergenerational collaboration in evaluations.
- Advocate for institutional changes that prioritize the inclusion of youth perspectives in UN decision-making processes.

Current areas of focus:

1. Report on the mapping of YEE engagement in UNEG agencies, including best practices and lessons learned.
2. Implementation of the UNEG-UNV Young evaluators programme.
3. Awareness-raising on career development opportunities for YEEs
4. Contributing to the revision of the UNEG strategy

Acknowledgements

The co-coordinators of the UNEG Young and Emerging Evaluators Working Group would like to thank Ms. Antonina Rishka-Poscecu, a young, Ukrainian evaluator, for her dedication and work in conducting this mapping exercise on our behalf.

This exercise would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions and support from a diverse group of stakeholders. We extend our gratitude to all members of the UNEG Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEE) group for their dedicated time and effort in data collection, report review, and the co-creation of suggested actions. We would further like to extend our gratitude to all evaluation colleagues who participated in the data collection and contributed to this exercise.

The Working Group further thanks the UNEG members for financially supporting this undertaking.

Lastly, we extend our thanks to Ms. Faith Chilupula (UNFPA) and Ms. Agnes Nyaga (OHCHR) for their leadership and stewardship in guiding the preparation of this report. The exercise also greatly benefited from the expertise and profound experience of Ms. Neha Karkara and Ms. Asela Kalugampitiya (UNFPA), whose contribution is appreciated.

Faith Chilupula, Agnes Nyaga, Jiayi He, Taipei Dlamini,
Co-coordinators of UNEG YEEs working group

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Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AF	United Nations Adaptation Fund
CLEAR-AA	The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results, Anglophone Africa
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
DGACM	United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
DMPSC	United Nations Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
DPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
DPPA	United Nations Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
EO	Evaluation Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus group discussion
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GCF	Green Climate Fund
HQ	Headquarters
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
JPO	Junior professional officer
KII	Key informant interview
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OLA	UN Office for Legal Affairs
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OIOS	United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PBSO	United Nations Peace Building Support Office - Financing for Peacebuilding
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN JIU	United Nations Joint Inspection Unit
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSDG SWEO	UN Secretariat - UN SDG System Wide Evaluation Office
UNU	United Nations University
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VNR	Voluntary National Reviews
VOPEs	Voluntary Organizations for Professional Evaluation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
YEEs	Young and Emerging Evaluators

Key definitions

Young and Emerging Evaluators (YEEs) are professionals who are either under the age of 35 and/or have less than 5 years of professional work experience in the field of evaluation¹.

"Internal" refers to an employee who is involved in the daily operations of the organization and knows the organizational culture and policies.

"External" refers to an employee who works on separate assignments (e.g. evaluation or other research exercises) and is not fully involved in organizational operations outside the assignment.

¹ The definition is provided based on EvalYouth's YEE definition: <https://evalyouth.org/index.php/mission-strategy/>.

Executive Summary

1. The United Nations Secretary General's "[Our Common Agenda](#)" and follow-up policy briefs stress the importance of meaningful youth engagement in policy and decision-making, highlighting their role in achieving sustainable development goals and rejuvenating the UN workforce. The international community gathered at the 2024 Summit of the Future renewed its commitment to meaningful youth engagement in the [Pact for the Future](#), including through active engagement of youth in UN processes. In light of this, it is crucial to assess youth involvement in UN decision-making and the specific role of young and emerging evaluators (YEEs) in shaping future UN programmes in general, and its evaluation function in particular. During the last 8 years, different UN agencies have made efforts to support YEEs through internships, mentorship programmes, training opportunities, participating in conferences and workshops, development of materials for more meaningful youth engagement, as well as organising advocacy campaigns and knowledge sharing sessions. However, YEEs still face barriers such as limited job access, uneven competition with experienced evaluators for junior positions, insufficient integration of YEEs in evaluation teams and a lack of institutional commitment and resources.

2. **Rationale:** During the 2023 UNEG AGM, a Working Group on YEEs was established to promote their meaningful engagement in evaluation across UNEG members. The mapping exercise, commissioned by the working group, is one of the group's initial activities. Its findings will inform the strategic planning of the group, as well as determine actions to further institutionalise and mainstream the meaningful engagement of YEEs in UNEG agencies.

3. **Objectives:** To identify the number, distribution, roles, entry points, and diversity of YEEs in UNEG agencies from 2015 to 2023, as well as to take stock of support across the six dimensions of the [Youth in Evaluation Standards](#): leadership, engagement practices, advocacy, communications, human resources, and financial resources. The mapping exercise highlights UNEG agencies' good practices to support the implementation of these standards across the report. It also seeks to identify opportunities and challenges faced by YEEs, document good practices and lessons learned, and propose suggested actions for institutionalising and enhancing YEEs engagement.

4. **Methodology:** The mapping exercise used a participatory system mapping approach with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods:

- 603 documents from 62 UNEG agencies² were analysed within the desk review, including evaluation policies, manuals and reports.
- 4 focus group discussions with 20 YEEs. The group discussions were gender balanced and included professionals from 8 UN agencies on different types of contracts (i.e. from interns to fixed-term staff).
- 32 key informant interviews were conducted with evaluation professionals from 23 UN agencies, ensuring diverse representation across nationalities, office levels (HQ, regional, national), and years of professional experience. KIIs targeted senior evaluators (20) and YEE from UN agencies and regions not represented in the focus group discussions.

² All UNEG members and observers according to [UNEG website list](#) (March 2024): CTBTO, DCO, DGACM, DMPSC, DPI, DPPA, DPO, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ECWA, FAO, GEF, GCF, IAEA, ICAO, ICC, IFAD, ILO, IMO, IOM, ITC, OCHA, OLA, OPCW, OHCHR, OIOS, PAHO, PBSO, UNAIDS, UNECA, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCAP, UNESCO, UNESCWA, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNDSS, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNITAR, UNICEF, UNICRI, UNIDO, UN JIU, UNOCT, UNODC, UNOSSC, UNRWA, UN SDG, UNU, UNV, UNWOMEN, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO with exception to the World Bank due to distinct operational scopes and evaluation practices.

- An exploratory survey in 3 languages, received 52 responses from 23 countries and 40 nationalities, representing 24 UN agencies.

5. The mapping exercise also sought to gather the perspectives of human resource professionals within the UN to better understand existing constraints for the recruitment of YEEs. However, our requests for consultations were not met and therefore this angle could not be analysed in depth in this report.

6. **Findings:** Individual UN agencies, where respondents work or worked, are perceived as more open to youth involvement by both YEEs and senior evaluators, compared to the UN system as a whole. There is a gap in aligning youth inclusion efforts across organizational functions. Although many agencies include youth as a stakeholder group in their strategic programme documents, only a few incorporate youth-focused efforts into evaluation policies and strategies. This is in part hindered by organizational and financial constraints.

7. In UNEG agencies, YEEs typically represent less than 20% of evaluation employees.³ despite both YEEs and senior evaluators agreeing on the value YEEs bring to evaluation processes. Young evaluators offer passion, mobility, and fresh perspectives. Senior evaluators recognize their innovative ideas, tech skills, and diverse viewpoints. Yet, YEEs encounter barriers such as high entry requirements, intense competition, and underutilization of their skills. Minimum experience requirements, often without an upper limit, tend to attract more experienced candidates. This practice limits opportunities for less experienced evaluators and hinders the start of their careers. Furthermore, while most agencies have shifted from unpaid to paid internships, unpaid internships still exist in the UN Secretariat.

8. Proactive individual managers play a crucial role in fostering meaningful youth involvement in the evaluation process. They provide mentoring, support training, YEEs' visibility and their inclusion into decision-making processes. This role is especially important in mitigating broader organizational limitations such as the absence of formal internship or fellowship structures, budget constraints, or lack of previous engagement practices for YEEs in the office.

9. The survey found that many organizations support local partners to enhance youth evaluation capacities, but only a small percentage engage with voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs). There are missed collaboration opportunities due to inactive or absent VOPEs. Resources for youth involvement in evaluation are dispersed, hindering easy access to materials for further professional development.

10. While training opportunities for YEEs are available, mentoring support is less so. Structured approaches such as mentoring and internships are essential for maximising the development of YEEs in UN agencies. 66% of respondents noted that their organizations provide YEEs access to evaluation networks and conferences, with regional events being favoured for their cost-effectiveness and accessibility.

11. Positions for young entry-level employees in the UN are limited. Often, these positions are however filled by more experienced candidates, who, although they largely exceed the minimum requirements laid out in the job description, apply for these entry-level positions as fixed-term posts in the UN are rare. As a result, overqualified candidates apply for entry-level positions, further limiting access to stable positions for more junior candidates. The limited number and diversity of young entry-level employees in rosters also hinder managers from hiring them. Additionally, positions labelled as "junior" or for "youth" can hinder the career growth of young employees and limit their involvement in decision-making processes.

12. Internal YEEs play a significant role in the evaluation process, with high participation rates and valuable remote engagement options. However, many external YEEs are not fully involved or are not always given as much room to participate throughout the evaluation process. This has led to

³ Including both external and internal employees.

unacknowledged contributions in reports. In some instances, they are not explicitly named as co-authors or contributors to the evaluation reports.

13. [Suggested Actions:](#)

UNEG YEE Group:

1. Consolidate all capacity-building materials for engaging youth in evaluation into a single, easily accessible section on the UNEG website. Summarise materials and create short to-do lists for meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation.
2. Establish structured mentorship programs and engage YEEs through the UNEG network.

UNEG:

3. Incorporate the requirement to include a youth perspective into the UNEG peer review process.
4. Include youth participation in the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and other relevant UNEG guidance materials.
5. Encourage UN agencies to assess their performance against the Standards on Youth in Evaluation on an annual basis.
6. Promote cross-organizational learning opportunities and specialised training workshops to enhance peer learning and skill development and include YEEs in these events.
7. Create rosters of YEEs that could be hired for or consulted in UNEG evaluation processes and share them between UNEG agencies (e.g. roster of young consultants, roster for youth advisory groups).

Leadership of Evaluation Offices of UNEG agencies:

8. Include youth engagement in evaluation in the Evaluation Policy and Strategy.
9. Include a dedicated budget for youth engagement in evaluation budgets, including to hire a young evaluator in external evaluation teams

YEEs:

10. Join the UNEG YEE working group and actively contribute to the discussions and activities.

1.Introduction

1.1 Context

14. The United Nations Secretary General's [Our Common Agenda](#) and follow-up [Policy Brief 3](#) (April 2023) and [Policy Brief 11](#) (September 2023) emphasise meaningful youth engagement in policy and decision-making as crucial for a better future. Policy Brief 3 advocates for expanding youth participation at all levels and making it a requirement in all UN decision-making processes, including evaluation functions. It calls for greater diversity, representativeness, and preparedness in youth engagement in evaluations. Policy Brief 11 focuses on cutting-edge skills and innovation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights the role of young people, especially young women, in rejuvenating the UN workforce. It underscores a commitment to youth engagement, amplifying their voices, and nurturing their leadership potential.

15. The [Summit of the Future](#), held in September 2024, saw the UN and Member States worldwide renew their commitment to youth engagement by calling for the implementation of 4 specific actions in its Pact for the Future⁴:

- Action 34: Invest in the social and economic development of children and young people so that they can reach their full potential
- Action 35: Promote, protect and respect the human rights of all young people and foster social inclusion and integration
- Action 36: Strengthen meaningful youth participation at the national level
- Action 37: Strengthen meaningful youth participation at the international level

16. More specifically, Action 37 urges UN agencies to '*promote meaningful, inclusive and effective engagement of young people in relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies and processes, where appropriate and in accordance with the rules of procedure and established practice, taking into account the principles of gender parity and balanced geographical representation and non-discrimination*'⁵. It is now for UN Evaluation Offices to also heed this call and actively and consistently engage with youth to help guide, shape and deliver quality evaluations for informed, evidence-based decision-making.

17. Considering these latest commitments, it is crucial to examine the current situation within UN evaluation offices and assess the involvement of young people in the UN's decision-making processes at all levels. This analysis aims to facilitate discussions on the specific role of young and emerging evaluators (YEEs) in shaping the future of UN's evaluation functions and their role in cultural and skills transformation in UN System entities.

18. Investments in engaging and building the capacities of YEEs also advance national evaluation capacities, which in turn accelerates the delivery of the SDGs. The UN General Assembly resolution (April 2023) on Strengthening Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) through Country-led Evaluation ([A77/L.64](#)) also underscores the importance of building capacities in evaluation.

19. Recently, various UN agencies have made deliberate efforts to recognize the potential and support the professional development of YEEs. A rapid stocktaking by the UNEG working group for YEEs in May 2023 revealed several examples such as providing internships, volunteer positions, supporting mentorship programmes, employment opportunities and creating specialised training opportunities in evaluation for

⁴ UN, *Summit of the Future, Outcome Documents – Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations*, September 2024, pages 25-28. It can be accessed here: <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future>

⁵ Ibid, para 63(a), p.27.

YEEs. For instance, in 2018, UNFPA, UNV and EvalYouth, in partnership with UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, FAO, and DPO committed to facilitating access to UNV positions for youth and young people interested in developing a career in evaluation. In 2019, the WFP and South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) collaboration led to a partnership with UNICEF and The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results, Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) to pilot a programme that supports YEEs through work immersion⁶. In 2019, OHCHR launched the ‘Promoting diversity and inclusion for youth in the Secretariat’ project which paved the way for young candidates, including YEEs, from developing countries to gain experience as UN volunteers at OHCHR in Geneva. This project won first place in the ‘Diversity and Inclusion’ category of the 2021 Secretary-General Awards.

20. In 2021, UNFPA, EvalYouth Global Network and the World Bank’s Global Evaluation Initiative formally collaborated to institutionalise the meaningful engagement and capacity development of YEEs⁷. In 2022, the Eval4Action advocacy campaign, co-led by UNFPA, EvalYouth, and the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation launched the [Youth in Evaluation Manifesto](#), which has 1000+ adoptees. Among UNEG agencies, the manifesto is supported by the Evaluation Offices of ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and the World Bank. In April 2023, Eval4Action launched the [standards](#) for enhancing the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation, including tailored standards for international organizations, during the first [Youth in Evaluation week](#).

21. Despite promising initiatives, YEEs continue to face barriers in the UN system, including limited access to evaluation jobs, few meaningful opportunities to contribute to and learn from evaluation processes, and limited avenues of professional growth and development. Visibility remains challenging as they struggle to establish credibility within the field. YEEs also face a substantial level of competition from more experienced evaluators for job opportunities and contracts. This competition can make it challenging for them to secure meaningful employment or projects in evaluation, further hindering their professional growth. Furthermore, there is a limited institutional commitment and few resources to meaningfully engage with YEEs within the evaluation processes of UNEG agencies, in a long-term and sustainable way.

1.2 Objectives

22. The main objectives of this mapping exercise on the engagement of YEEs within UNEG agencies are to⁸:

- 1) Identify the number and distribution of YEEs within UNEG agencies since 2015⁹, including their roles in the evaluation function, YEE’s entry points into the UN system, levels of professional experience, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) competencies required by UN agencies for YEEs, and demographic information of YEEs to determine diversity.
- 2) Take stock of support for YEE’s engagement in UNEG agencies around 6 dimensions¹⁰:
 - a. Leadership and accountability for YEE’s engagement;
 - b. Practice of engaging YEEs in evaluation processes;
 - c. Advocacy and capacity development support to YEEs;

⁶ WFP Evaluation: [Country Capacity Strengthening Lessons from WFP Evaluation Initiatives \(2022\)](#)

⁷ UNFPA updates: [New partnership to advance youth engagement in evaluation \(2021\)](#)

⁸ The objectives were defined in the Concept note of the Mapping exercise presented in Annex 1.

⁹ To align with the start of SDGs, so that the mapping can serve as a baseline to chart progress in 2030.

¹⁰ These 6 dimensions are aligned with the [Standards to enhance meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation](#), for international organizations, released in April 2023. The standards were developed by an intergenerational task force, helmed by Eval4Action campaign.

- d. Communications and knowledge management to enhance YEE engagement;
 - e. Human resources; and
 - f. Financial resources for YEE's engagement.
- 3) Identify opportunities and challenges faced by YEEs in UNEG agencies, e.g. (but not limited to) career advancement, access to mentorship, capacity building and networking opportunities.
 - 4) Document good practices, and lessons learned and provide actionable recommendations to further institutionalise and strengthen the meaningful engagement of YEEs in UNEG agencies.

1.3 Methodology

23. The mapping exercise is exploratory. It used a participatory system mapping approach. It covers the period from 2015 to 2023, aligning with the start of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The mapping used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance the depth and reliability of the information and ensure its triangulation. The mapping exercise involved a desk review of 603 documents from 62 UNEG agencies, including evaluation policies, manuals, reports, and other relevant documents. 32 key informant interviews were conducted with evaluation professionals from 24 UN agencies in 19 countries, ensuring representation from various types of offices (i.e. field offices and Headquarters), age groups (i.e. YEEs and senior evaluators) as well as professional levels and contractual status (consultants and fixed-term staff). Four focus group discussions were held with 20 YEEs, ensuring gender balance, inclusion of people with disabilities and geographical diversity. A web-based survey, distributed via multiple online channels in three languages (English, Spanish and French), gathered 52 responses from evaluation professionals in 23 countries, representing 23 UN agencies. The full description of the methodology is presented in [Annex 2](#).

Table 1: Participation of UN agency evaluation employees in KII, FGDs and survey

Agency	KII (n)	FGD (n)	Survey (n,%)	Agency	KII (n)	FGD (n)	Survey (n,%)	Agency	KII (n)	FGD (n)	Survey (n,%)
AF			2 (4%)	UNEP	1			UNOCT			1 (2%)
FAO	2		1 (2%)	UNESCO		3	2 (4%)	UNODC			1 (2%)
GCF	1		2 (4%)	UNDESA			1 (2%)	UNRWA		1	1 (2%)
IAEA	1		1 (2%)	UNDP	2		4 (8%)	UN SDG			1 (2%)
IOM		2	2 (4%)	UNDSS			1 (2%)	UNV	1		1 (2%)
ITC			1 (2%)	UNFPA	3	5	5 (10%)	UN WOMEN			2 (4%)
IFAD			1 (2%)	UNHCR	2		2 (4%)	WFP	1		1(2%)

OCHA	1			UNICEF	2		3 (6%)	WHO	1	1	
OHCHR	3	1	3 (6%)	UNIDO	1			Consultants working in different agencies	8	7	10 (19%)
OIOS	1		3 (6%)	UNITAR	1			Total	32	20	52(100%)

24. This robust methodology guided the mapping exercise, but it is important to acknowledge that it also faced some limitations. Rules and regulations for recruitments and budgeting vary from one agency to another. Access to positions for YEEs are more or less difficult depending on various factors (e.g. status of the organisation as a member of the UN Secretariat agency, a specialized agency or fund; rules applying to regular programme budget versus voluntary contributions. length of budget cycles, etc). Given the complexity of the UN structures and applicable rules and regulations, the intention was initially to consult the entities responsible for human resources in each UNEG agency in order to better understand and map the potential challenges related to securing positions for YEEs and ensuring their sustained presence in their respective evaluation offices. Some human resource professionals were contacted but no exhaustive responses were provided; pointing out their inability to track all junior evaluation positions as they are often hidden behind different position names and modalities¹¹. As a result, this crucial aspect could not be analysed in depth in the mapping exercise.

3. Findings

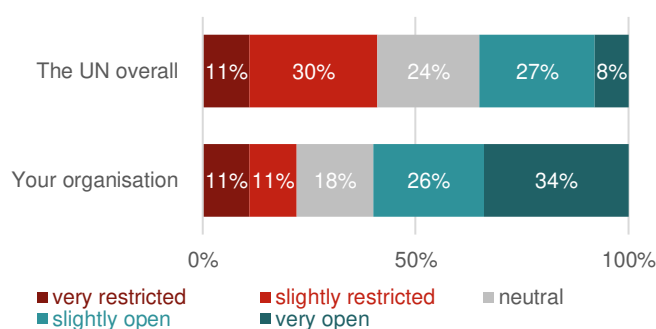
3.1 YEEs in UNEG agencies: distribution, added value, opportunities and challenges.

Finding 1. Both YEEs and senior evaluators perceive individual UN agencies to be more open to youth engagement than the UN system. Senior evaluators see the UN as more open than YEEs do. Overall, geographical and gender distribution among YEEs in agencies are perceived as high, except at HQ, where unpaid internships remain prevalent, and the diversity is much lower. Remote engagement of YEEs has however opened up opportunities for some YEEs to access the UN from afar.

¹¹ The responses were provided by UNV, and UNICEF.

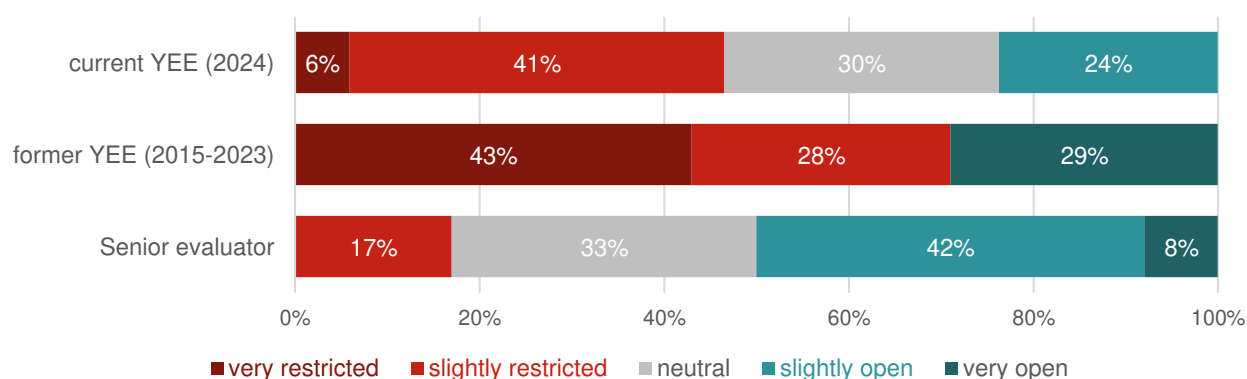
25. Overall, 60% of survey respondents find their UN agency open or very open to YEEs, while only 35% view the entire UN in the same light. Conversely, 41% perceive the UN as restrictive towards YEEs (Figure 1). This sentiment was echoed in KII/FGDs, where participants expressed more concern about the UN's overall limited openness towards YEEs compared to their own agencies, which they perceived as relatively open.

Figure 1. Survey respondents believe their own organisation is more open to YEEs than the UN system overall (n=52)



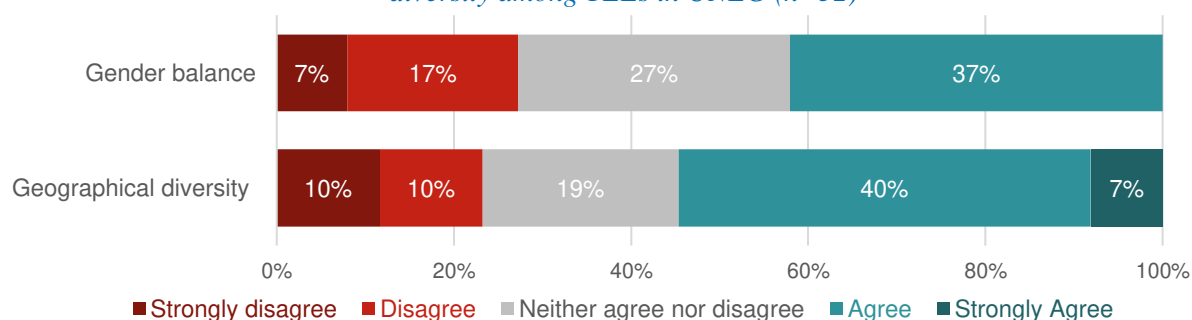
26. Moreover, senior evaluators perceive the UN as more open than YEEs do (Figure 2). The KII/FGDs confirmed that YEEs are more critical of the UN and perceive significantly more restrictions and challenges to meaningful engagement.

Figure 2. 2 in 10 senior evaluators and up to 7 in 10 YEEs find access to the UN to be restricted for YEEs (n=52)



27. Overall, 47% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that the geographical distribution of YEEs in their respective UN agencies is high. 37% also believe that gender diversity among YEEs is well balanced (Figure 3). KII/FGDs informants also agreed that geographical and gender diversity of YEEs is high in UN agencies, except at HQ, where unpaid internships remain prevalent, and the geographical diversity is much lower as the unpaid internships are more accessible to YEEs from the Global North.

Figure 3. Close to half of survey respondents deem there is good gender balance and geographical diversity among YEEs in UNEG (n=52)



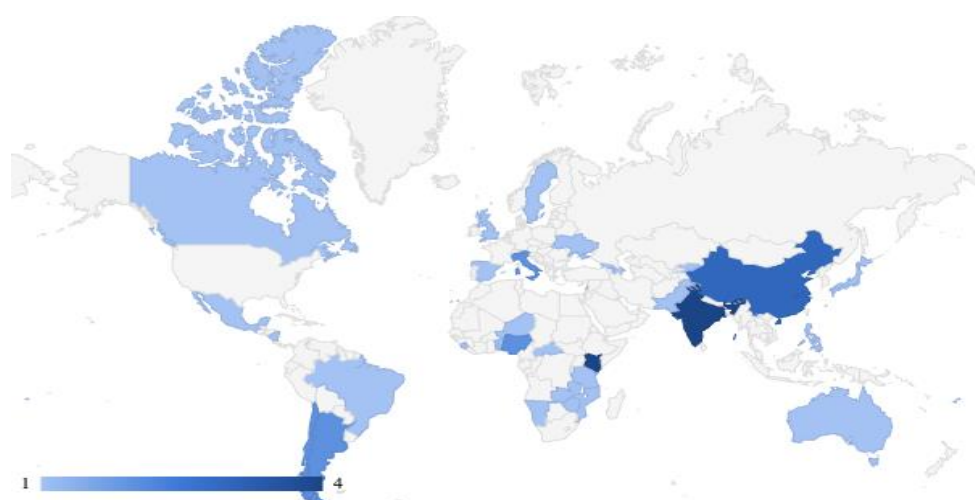
28. The recent increase in opportunities for remote work since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic have further enabled young evaluators from more diverse backgrounds to join the UN as well. In recent years, Evaluation Offices have realized that the remote engagement of YEEs can be as meaningful and beneficial as that of those physically present in the office. In some cases, it offers more opportunities for those unable to relocate due to medical conditions, limited resources, security concerns, or for cultural reasons.

“I would not have had the opportunity to work and live in Geneva for such a salary as a consultant. It is really difficult, but here I feel good, and I am well integrated in the team.” – YEE

“My parents would never allow me to go to another city or country alone as a young woman. That online internship was a great opportunity to start working and learn” - YEE

29. As a result, the diversity of YEEs participating in the mapping exercise was high. The KII and FGD sampling aimed for high diversity, and it was easy to find YEEs from various nationalities working in UN agencies at different levels. Overall, 46 YEEs of 48 nationalities participated in the mapping exercise¹², including 38 from the Global South¹³ (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Geographic distribution of YEEs - survey, KII, FGDs respondents based on nationality



White - no respondents
Light blue - 1 respondent

Medium light blue - 2 respondents
Medium dark blue - 3 respondents

Dark blue - 4 respondents.

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material on the map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNEG members concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

¹² In survey: 17 YEEs of 19 nationalities, 29 YEEs of 29 nationalities in the KIIs/FGDs. While there is a possibility of double counting, when the same YEEs participated in both methods, the overlapping of nationalities is minimal - only 5 appear in both: Argentina, Chile, India, Kenya, and Nigeria.

¹³ 38 YEEs with nationalities from Global South. 2 YEEs who declared double nationalities, one of which was from the Global North, were not counted.

Finding 2. In UNEG agencies, YEEs typically comprise less than 20% of evaluation personnel, with the majority based in their respective agencies' HQ. While internal YEEs are engaged under various contractual arrangements, they tend to have consultancy contracts over long periods of time compared to senior evaluators who are often recruited on more stable contracts. This often results in decreased job security and fewer benefits. The main reasons for not hiring YEEs are the lack of organization commitment to engage YEEs, limited understanding of how to effectively involve YEEs, and insufficient financial resources.

30. Based on the survey data, most agencies have less than 20% of YEEs within all evaluation employees, regardless of the size of the evaluation function and the number of personnel. This is supported by the data provided by consulted UNEG agencies as part of the mapping's desk review. The highest concentration of internal YEEs is typically found at the respective agencies' Headquarters. At FAO and UNESCO HQ offices, YEEs make up half of the evaluation employees. YEEs' engagement at the regional and national levels is less common, mainly reported in UNFPA and UNICEF offices.

31. The majority (16 out of 17) of YEEs among survey respondents work full-time with different types of employment contracts, including fixed-term contracts (6 out of 17), temporary positions (3 out of 17), long-term consultancy roles (3 out of 17), service contracts (2 out of 17) and permanent positions (2 out of 17). 7 out of 13¹⁴ senior evaluators hired YEEs as short-term consultants during the 2015-2023, while 5 hired them as long-term consultants, fixed term contracts or service contracts. The UNV, both UNV Youth and UNV Specialist, were the least frequent hiring types. Only one respondent out of 13 had experience hiring UNV.

32. However, in the FGDs and KIIs, it was indicated that at least one-third or more of YEEs are internal long-term consultants, which contrasts with senior evaluators who rarely have such contracts. Among the FGD and KII informants, at least half of the YEEs work as long-term consultants, 2 are interns and 6 are short-term consultants. The informants highlighted that long-term consultancy contracts are a common arrangement for YEEs, noting the ease of entry procedures but also expressing concerns about job security, medical insurance, and leave entitlements.

33. Six of 33 senior evaluators in the survey said they never collaborated with YEEs due to the organization's lack of commitment, understanding, and financial resources for engaging YEEs. As confirmed by KIIs, the absence of organizational commitment reflects a broader issue of inclusion and youth engagement within the evaluation function. Without a clear mandate or strategic direction to include YEEs, evaluators find it challenging to integrate young professionals into their teams. Additionally, some senior evaluators in the KIIs expressed that they lack the necessary guidance and tools to effectively mentor and integrate YEEs into their evaluation activities. Financial constraints further exacerbate this issue. Many organizations operate within tight budgets, and as noted by 9 out of 17 senior KII informants, allocating resources for hiring and supporting YEEs is not seen as a priority in their offices due to overall small budgets for the evaluation function.

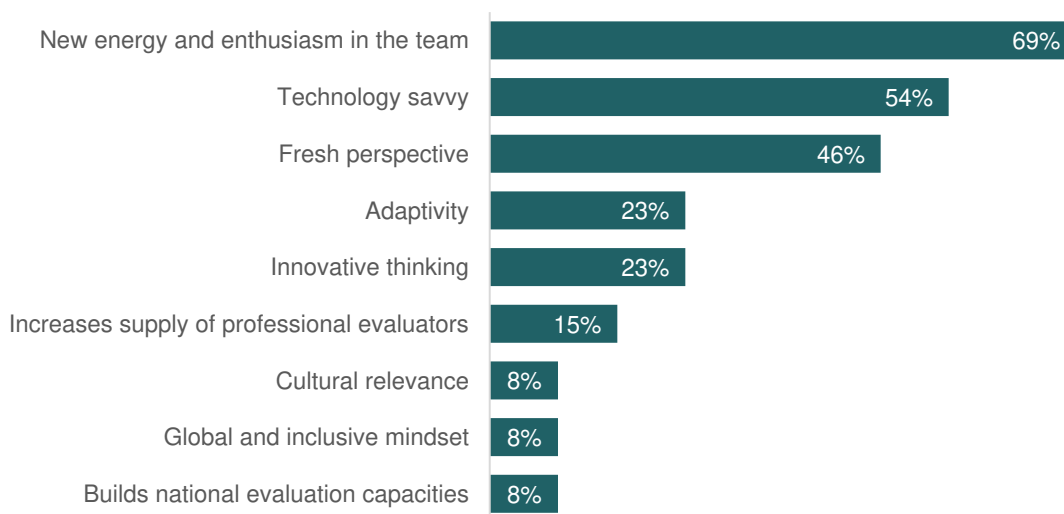
Finding 3. Dynamic energy and technological savviness are noted as key added values of YEEs, but the diverse skill sets of young evaluators are often underutilised.

34. Both YEEs and senior evaluators agree on the significant added value that YEEs bring to the evaluation process. During the KIIs and FGDs, young evaluators emphasised their passion, mobility, and fresh perspectives, which help them gain valuable experience and contribute meaningfully to evaluation exercises. Senior evaluators similarly recognize the innovative ideas, technological skills, and diverse viewpoints that young professionals introduce, enhancing the overall quality and inclusiveness of evaluations. The added value

¹⁴ 13 respondents who had experience of hiring YEEs during the period of 2015-2023

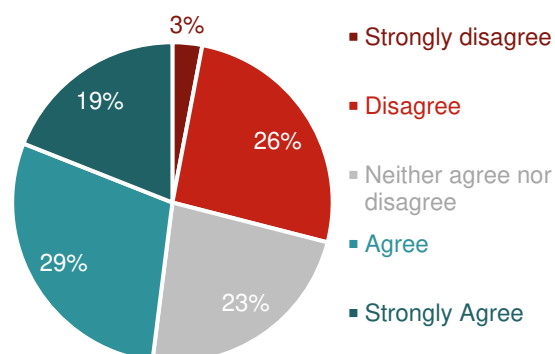
was confirmed also in the survey responses. There is a consensus between the 2 groups that YEEs' energy, creativity, and tech-savviness are vital assets for modernising and enriching evaluation practices.

Figure 5. Senior evaluator's perspective on YEEs' main added value (n=33¹⁵)



35. However, approximately half of the survey respondents believe that the diverse skill sets of young evaluators are frequently underutilised within the UN system (Figure 6). Despite their potential and broad range of competencies, the very high entry requirements for evaluation positions often prevent young evaluators from fully contributing to and advancing within the organization. This statement was also confirmed during the KII/FGDs when YEE informants stated that young evaluators may not be adequately recognized or valued within UN agencies, leading to feelings of marginalisation and disengagement.

Figure 6. Almost half of respondents believe the diverse skill sets of young evaluators is underutilised (n=52)



“In my personal experience the entry barriers for UN organizations are very high, competitive and restrictive (especially for people from the Global South) but once you make it “in”, you find out that you are somewhat overqualified, and your skills are underutilised.” - YEE

Finding 4. YEEs identify diverse work experience and professional development as the main benefits of working in the UN. However, high skill requirements and the competitive nature of the UN job market are barriers to starting an evaluation career at the UN.

¹⁵ Respondents with more than 5 years of experience in evaluation.

36. 75% of YEE respondents in the survey noted that their experience as a YEE in a UN agency is/was positive or very positive, and only 8% had a negative experience (Figure 7)¹⁶. YEEs noted diverse working experience and professional development as significant advantages of working within the UN (Figure 8). As discussed in FDGs, the exposure to various projects, cultures, and international contexts enriches YEEs' professional knowledge and skills, making them more versatile and adaptable. Additionally, the UN provides numerous opportunities for continuous learning and growth through training programmes, workshops, and cross-functional collaborations. This environment enhances their competencies and broadens their career prospects within and beyond the UN system.

Figure 7. 3 in 4 YEEs have had good experiences working in a UN agency (n=24)

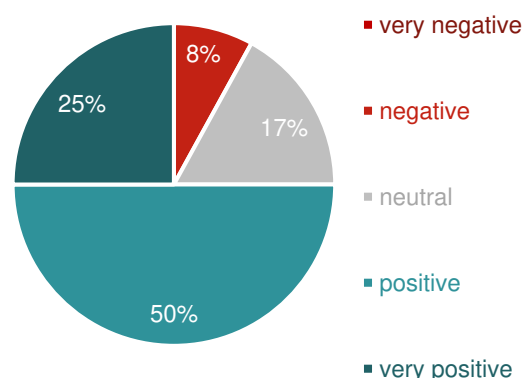


Figure 8. The majority of YEEs especially appreciated the diverse work experience and professional development opportunities in the UN (n=24¹⁷)



37. Survey respondents identified several barriers for YEEs to enter the UN; related to high levels of competition, lack of opportunities as well as limiting mindsets. While the main barriers depending on the respondent (cf. Figure 9), all agreed that high skill requirements and the intensely competitive nature of the UN job market are the primary obstacles for YEEs aspiring to start their careers in the organization. These barriers are further exacerbated by the lack of practical experience in evaluation, which many young professionals struggle to obtain). Additionally, during the FDGs, YEEs stated that the absence of robust professional networks and connections makes it even more challenging for them to navigate the entry points into UN roles.

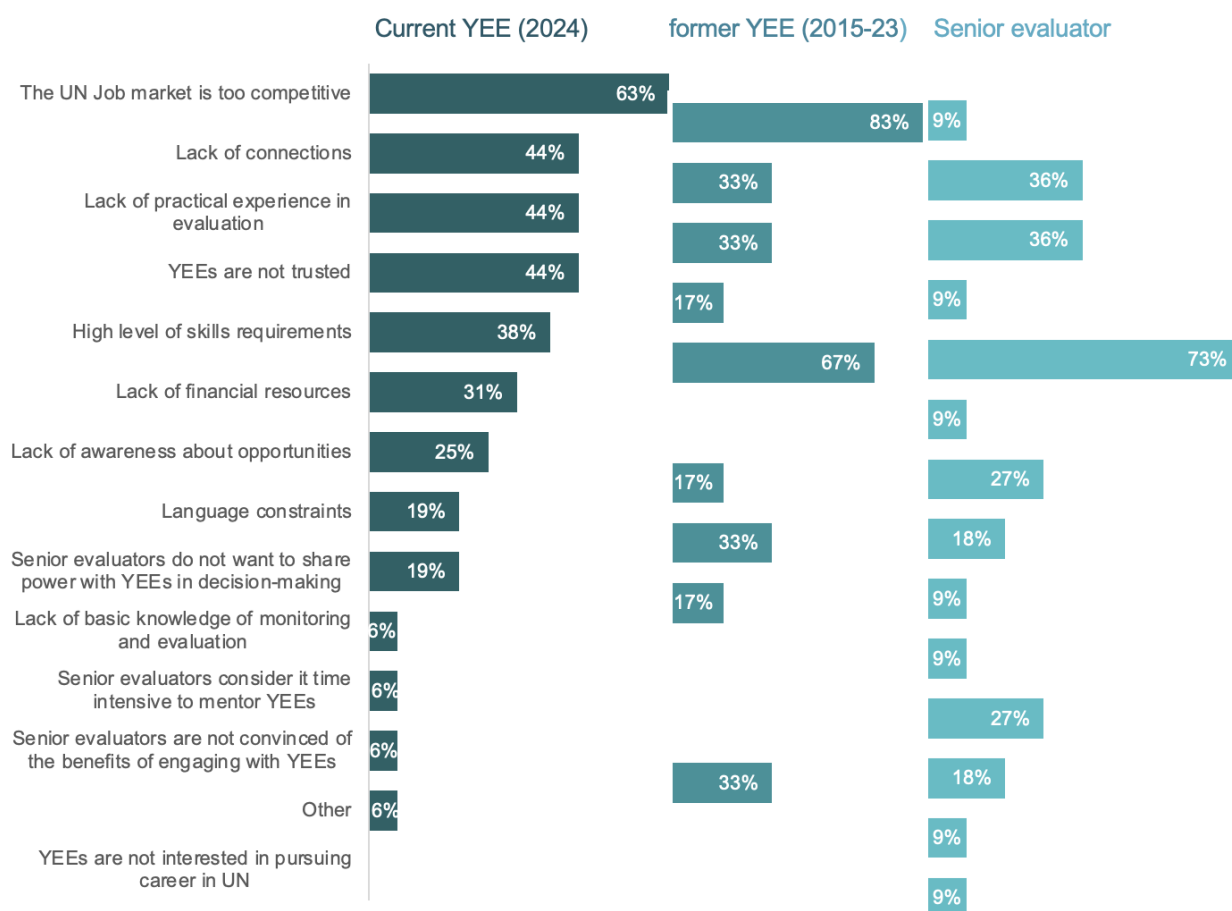
38. Senior evaluators also attribute low integration of YEEs to a general lack of awareness about available opportunities among potential applicants, and the considerable time investment needed for senior evaluators to mentor YEEs effectively. During KII, senior evaluators noted that mentoring and guiding YEEs is time-

¹⁶ Question "In general, how would you rate your experience as YEEs working in a UN agency?" .

¹⁷ Question: 'What are the main advantages of working in the UN for you as a YEE'?

consuming and requires additional effort beyond their main tasks, which is often not encouraged by management.

Figure 9. The survey reveals stark differences in perceptions regarding what constitutes the main barriers for YEEs to entering the UN: depending on the respondents age and experience (n=52)



39. Moreover, during the KII and FGDs, YEE informants highlighted a lack of clarity in contract requirements and difficulties in understanding job descriptions, leading to confusion and potential barriers in job applications. This ambiguity often results in young evaluators being unsure about the expectations and qualifications needed for specific roles, which can discourage them from applying and limit their opportunities for advancement.

40. Effective strategies to address these challenges can be seen in the practices of the UNESCO HQ office in Paris. UNESCO collaborates with universities in Paris to host Q&A sessions on UN evaluation practices, including providing clarification for prospective applicants. Similarly, UNFPA and IFAD support online peer-to-peer sessions where various topics, including the application process, are discussed, helping to demystify job requirements and improve understanding. Despite being open to all, only 2 out of 20 YEEs in FGDs had attended these sessions. Others mentioned low visibility of these initiatives and called for dedicated sessions on UN evaluation careers.

3.2 Support for YEEs' engagement in UNEG agencies

3.2.1. Leadership and accountability

Finding 5. While about half of UNEG agencies include youth in their strategic programming, only 7 mention youth in their evaluation strategies, revealing a gap between programming and evaluation. Two-thirds of interview informants stress the need to align evaluation strategies with commitments to youth inclusion.

41. Half of the UNEG agencies include youth as one of their stakeholder groups in their strategic programming documents – such as country programs, strategic plans or specific project descriptions -, but this emphasis is not reflected in agencies' evaluation strategies and policies. Only 7 agencies (UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, IFAD, UNESCO¹⁸, OHCHR¹⁹) explicitly mention youth in their evaluation strategies or refer to youth or young evaluators in evaluation manuals. For example, the UNFPA Evaluation Policy 2024 commits to multi-stakeholder and intergenerational partnerships with youth to enhance their evaluation capacities. Similarly, the WFP Corporate Evaluation Strategy 2022 highlights engaging young evaluators to diversify evaluation capacities for better results. This discrepancy highlights a gap between the strategic intent to include youth in programming and missing the opportunity to engage youth in the evaluation process.

42. Two thirds of interview informants highlighted a need for agencies to align their evaluation strategies and policies with broader commitments to youth inclusion in programming.

Finding 6. Individual champions, such as managers and directors/heads of offices, can make a difference in offices, even in the absence of organizational commitments for YEEs engagement or previous practices of engaging YEEs.

43. In KIIs and FGDs, both YEEs and senior evaluators agreed that enthusiastic managers and office heads who actively involve YEEs play a crucial role in fostering youth engagement in evaluation, even amid broader agency constraints or lack of experience. These leaders exceed expectations by advocating for and mentoring YEEs, significantly enhancing their professional growth and inclusion. Their proactive efforts create pockets of innovation and support, showing that committed team leaders can make a difference for YEEs in the office.

"I've taken full responsibility to mentor a YEE and to be with her during all the process even above my working hours and responsibilities, even when others in the office were sceptical on the idea of YEE engagement" - Senior evaluator

Good practice for leadership and accountability

- **UNFPA** integrated its commitment to the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation into its evaluation policy, evaluation strategy, evaluation handbook, and costed evaluation plans. This strategic alignment facilitated synchronised support actions across all organizational offices, ensuring that YEEs in various countries and regions have equal opportunities for different forms of engagement with UNFPA:

¹⁸ Not explicitly mentioned in evaluation policy but referred to in the UNESCO Evaluation Manual 2023: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383948>

¹⁹ OHCHR RBM Manual 2019

“I took part in the evaluation of UNFPA’s 8th country programme in the Central African Republic. This gave me a wealth of knowledge in evaluation and created further opportunities.” – YEE.

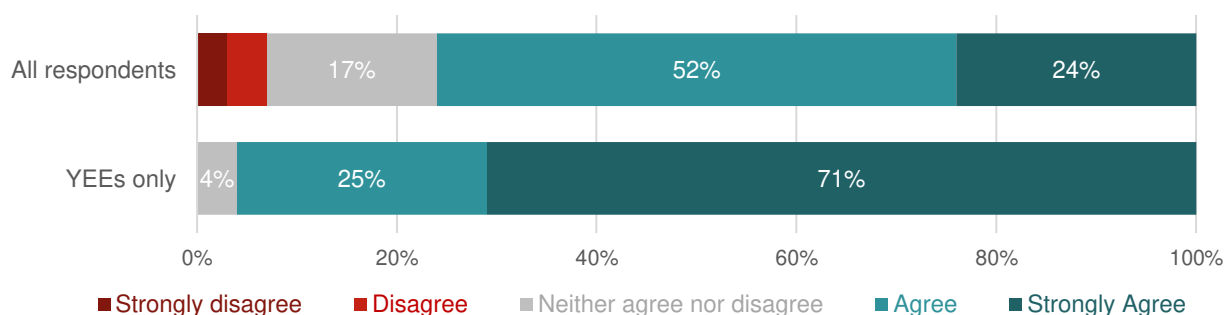
- In 2022, the Eval4Action advocacy campaign, co-led by UNFPA, EvalYouth, and Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation launched the [Youth in Evaluation Manifesto](#), which has 1000+ signatories. Among UNEG agencies, the manifesto is supported by the Evaluation Offices of ILO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and the World Bank.
- [Youth in Evaluation](#) is an initiative which started in 2022 co-chaired by UNFPA, EvalYouth, and Global Parliamentarian Forum. It brings together more than 200 stakeholders, including UN agencies, around the importance of the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation.
- 6 UN agencies (**UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, OHCHR, WFP and UNHCR**) completed and submitted the self-assessments on the [standards](#) for enhancing meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation for international organizations introduced by the Youth in Evaluation Initiative. These self-assessments help agencies to analyse their status on youth engagement against six main aspects: leadership and accountability, evaluation practice, advocacy and capacity development, knowledge management and communication, human resources, financial resources.
- The **UNESCO** Evaluation Office developed an Action Plan (2024) on its engagement and commitments with youth in evaluation. The action plan was formulated following a self-assessment of how the standards for enhancing meaningful youth engagement in evaluation were being applied in UNESCO. The Action Plan addresses the main weak points identified in the assessment and outlines actions for improving youth engagement in evaluation.

3.2.2 Evaluation Practice

Finding 7. Internal YEEs are actively engaged in the evaluation process. A majority of internal YEEs contribute to decision-making processes. However, external YEEs report more limited involvement, and many remain unrecognised in reports.

44. Internal YEEs are generally well engaged throughout the evaluation process. 3 in 4 survey respondents agree that YEEs in their respective agencies contribute and participate actively throughout the evaluation process (Figure 10). Surveyed YEE-s themselves – all internal employees – almost unanimously agreed with this.

Figure 10. 77% of survey respondents (n=52), among which 96% of YEEs (n=24), believe YEEs are actively engaged throughout the evaluation process



45. This high level of engagement was also confirmed by YEEs who participated in KIIs and FGDs, who mentioned their engagement in all phases of evaluation including the planning, data collection²⁰, analysis and reporting. 84% of YEEs in the survey confirmed that they were given an opportunity to make contributions towards the decision-making process. These testimonies highlight how YEEs sitting in the Evaluation Offices play an integral role in the evaluation practice of UNEG agencies.

46. On the contrary, interviewed external YEEs mention that often they were excluded from decision-making processes and contributed only in limited part to the evaluation process, often local data collection.

“I’ve done data collection and provided notes. Everything else was done by the senior evaluator.” - External YEE

47. Furthermore, YEEs interviewed during KIIs and FGDs, mentioned how external YEEs often remain unrecognised in official reports, even if they contribute to some parts or throughout the evaluation process. Individual consultants frequently work with YEE assistants, and consultancy firms may employ multiple YEEs. Yet their roles and contributions are rarely acknowledged or documented.

“I worked on two UN evaluations and am currently working on one, but I am on the support side, I am preparing materials, doing analysis of data for senior colleagues, they are in the evaluation team. This is a great learning for me, and also money. Just I am not sure how I can include this in my CV” – YEE

48. The lack of visibility not only means that the work of these young professionals is not recognized, but it also hides the full extent of youth involvement in evaluation activities.

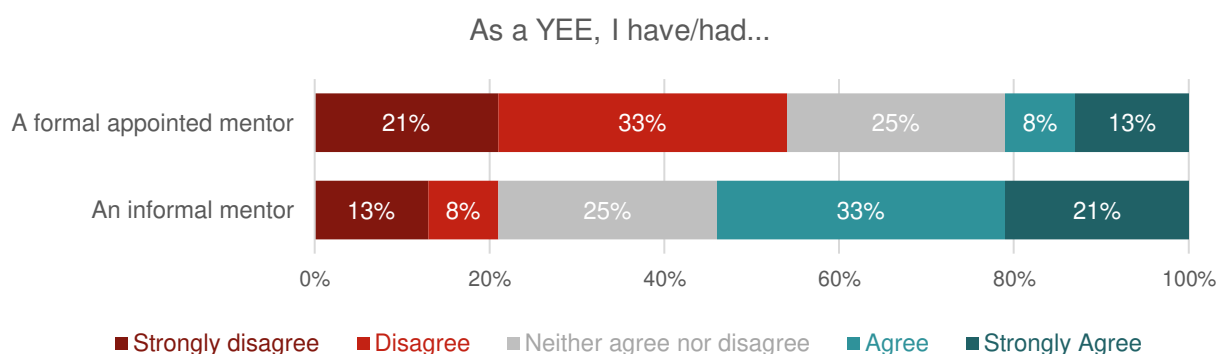
Finding 8: YEEs perceive a lack of mentoring support within UNEG agencies. Structured approaches like bi-weekly mentoring and organised internships are crucial for maximising YEEs development in UN agencies.

49. The importance of a structured approach for better YEE engagement in evaluation practice is an essential component to ensure appropriate YEE involvement in evaluation processes. Nevertheless, mentoring support, which is crucial for professional growth and practical application of learned skills, is often perceived as insufficient. Consulted YEEs mentioned the lack of mentoring, and indicated that while they may receive initial training, they miss out on the guidance and support needed to navigate complex evaluation tasks and advance their careers within the organization.

50. Proper YEE engagement in UN Evaluation Offices entails ensuring constant support and guidance from more experienced evaluators in the office. The survey however paints a more mixed picture of the guidance role vis-à-vis YEEs which remains less consistent and formalized. Only 21% reported formal mentoring experience, while 54% had an informal mentor during their assignment as a YEE.

²⁰ External YEEs were more engaged in data collection, while internal in preparing evaluations and revising results.

Figure 11. Most YEEs²¹ benefit from training, but few are mentored (n=24)



51. Yet, as highlighted by KII informants - both YEEs and senior evaluators -, regular meetings and a structured approach to YEEs' engagement help to keep active engagement. Bi-weekly mentoring meetings or organised internship programs with regular learning sessions have significantly helped internal YEEs maximise their learning and career development opportunities within UN agencies.

"It is not our first internship, we have already developed some systems - regular bi-weekly meetings, establishing goals at the beginning of the internship, and having feedback sessions." - Senior evaluator

52. In contrast, the lack of such structures often leaves young professionals desperately searching for meaningful engagement and their place in the organization. Indeed, while 88% of YEEs in the survey clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, some YEEs in the FGDs highlighted challenges in this area.

"I was 6 months at work, and still did not understand what evaluation is and what I am doing or not doing, my supervisor just "pushed me to swim". I wasted a lot of time." - YEE

53. According to senior evaluators, managers often operate within constrained financial and time resources, making efforts to meaningfully engage YEEs in addition to their primary responsibilities. They are looking for structured guidance on how to meaningfully engage youth.

Good practices for engaging YEEs in evaluation process:

- In 2023, **UNFPA** finalised the formative [evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth](#), where youth were engaged as decision makers in the form of a Youth steering Committee, as co-evaluators and as key informants.
- In 2024, **UNICEF** established a youth advisory group (YAG) for the [evaluation of the global gender policy and gender action plans](#) in 2024. In addition, the evaluation included adolescents and youth consultations at the country level, using their perspectives to feed into evaluation findings and formulation of recommendations. Capacity building initiatives for the members of the YAG were implemented through various online trainings.

²¹ 24 respondents who currently are YEEs or were YEEs during the 2015-2023 period.

3.2.3 Advocacy and capacity development

Finding 9. One third of survey respondents indicated their organizations support local partners in enhancing youth evaluation capacities, while fewer engage with VOPEs. Informants noted missed opportunities for collaboration due to inactive or absent VOPEs or limited connections. However, there are good examples of collaboration with VOPEs, particularly at the national level.

54. One-third of survey respondents indicated their organizations support local partners in building youth evaluation capacity (Figure 12). KII respondents cited workshops at universities, collaborations with youth-led organizations, and initiatives targeting specific groups, such as refugee youth, as examples of this support.

55. However, only 17% of survey respondents said their organizations engage with voluntary organizations for professional evaluation (VOPEs). KII informants highlighted that agencies miss out on the specialised expertise and networks VOPEs offer. The lack of cooperation is often due to inactive or absent VOPEs in the region or a lack of established connections with them.

“In this region we don't have any active VOPE. In Latin America we cooperated with ReLAC with an active youth group there, but we can't invent it here [Central Asia].” - Evaluation manager

56. In the cases where there is some form of collaboration, UNEG organizations like UNFPA, UNICEF, and WFP aim to strengthen national capacities by collaborating with VOPEs. This cooperation usually occurs at the national level rather than at the headquarters level, as indicated by KIIs.

57. There are some good practices reflecting close cooperation between the UN office and national VOPE on youth in evaluation. For example, the Zimbabwe UNICEF office works with the Zimbabwe Evaluation Society, the national VOPE, on many advocacy and capacity building activities targeting YEEs, which are the main force of the VOPE. The UNDP office in Madagascar collaborates with the Malagasy Evaluation Association to advocate for and support capacity-building activities among a large cohort of young and emerging evaluators. WFP has extended cooperation with the South African VOPE (SAMEA) and one crucial component of this cooperation is efforts for enhancing the engagement of YEEs. UNFPA collaborates closely with various VOPEs, such as the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and the Latin American and Caribbean network of monitoring, evaluation and systematisation (ReLAC), to strengthen national capacities and advocate for youth engagement in evaluation.

Finding 10. Several organizations have created capacity-building materials for youth involvement in evaluation, but these resources (including recordings, manuals, and briefs) are often dispersed across various organizational sources, hindering easy access and effective utilisation.

58. Most KII informants indicated they are generally unaware of manuals or tools for youth engagement, yet the survey reveals that 28% of respondents agree their organizations produce capacity-building materials to advance youth engagement in evaluation (Figure 13). These materials offer opportunities for YEEs to contribute to the body of knowledge in evaluation theory and practice.

Figure 12: 33% of respondents believe UN organizations support local partners for capacity-building of youth in evaluation, including YEEs (n=52)

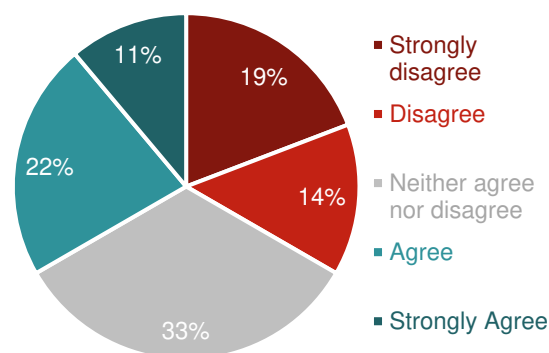
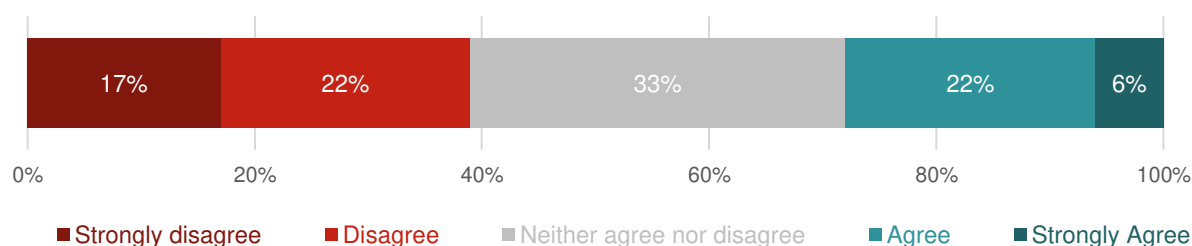


Figure 13: A quarter of respondents believe UN organizations have produced capacity-building materials on advancing youth engagement in evaluation (n=52)



“Before the start of an evaluation, we have a kind of choice on how to shape the ToR and evaluation, but mostly we use copy-paste from some previous successful evaluations including the evaluation questions. I don't know where to look properly on youth engagement and how to bring it out correctly in an evaluation.” - Evaluation manager.

59. Therefore, finding materials on youth engagement in evaluation may complicate evaluation managers' efforts to locate and effectively utilise resources. As mentioned by YEEs in KIIs, this challenge is accompanied by the lack of a centralised database of information specific to YEEs, limiting their opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and career advancement within UNEG agencies.

Finding 11: There is a high number of training opportunities in evaluation available to internal YEEs, particularly at the basic level.

60. YEE engagement also entails ensuring continuous development support for those hired within the UN agencies. According to the survey, most agencies respond to this need. Training opportunities in evaluation for internal YEEs, particularly at the basic level, are mostly available in UN agencies. 47% of respondents agreed on that. (Figure 14). However, KII informants noted a lack of specialised and more profound training in evaluation within the UN system. YEEs seek those through external events such as specialized training programmes delivered by other institutions, workshops and conferences on evaluation. Given the lack of advanced training opportunities within the UN system, UNEG agencies are somewhat supportive of exploring opportunities outside: 58% of YEE survey respondents have participated in specialised evaluation training programmes and workshops provided externally. Most survey respondents also recognize the UN organization they work for supports YEEs in seizing external opportunities for evaluation capacity development (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Close to half the survey respondents believe their UN agency offers training and career advancement opportunities for YEEs (n=52)

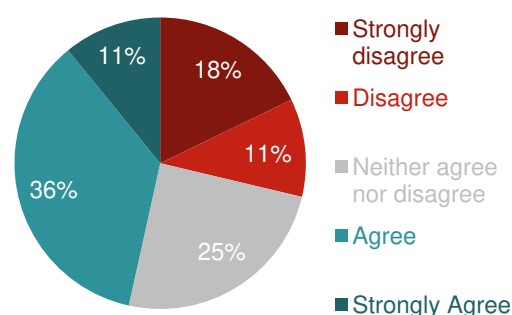
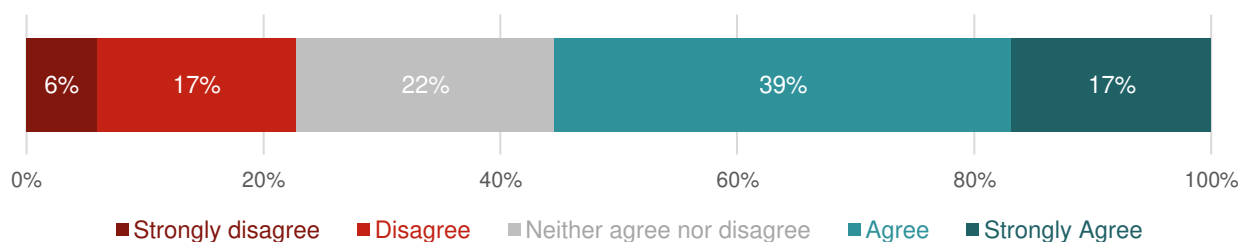


Figure 15: 56% of respondents recognize their UN organizations provides YEEs access to evaluation networks and conferences to engage, network and learn from other YEEs and professionals (n=52)



Good practices for advocacy and capacity development support to YEEs

UN agencies have developed a series of manuals and guides to support youth engagement in evaluation:

- UNFPA Guide on youth engagement in evaluation: Leveraging the power of youth in evaluation: A practical guide to meaningfully engaging youth in evaluation processes (2024)
- UNICEF Guidance Note: Adolescent participation in UNICEF monitoring and evaluation (2019)
- UNICEF Useful tools for engaging young people in participatory evaluation (2005).
- UNESCO Youth as Researchers Training Manual (2015).

UN agencies have also supported the capacity development of YEEs through various initiatives:

- During the 2018-2023 **UNFPA** supported 4 YEE-led schools (summer/winter) in different regions: Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and Caribbean. The training aimed to enhance capacities for local YEEs by delivering tailored materials in regional languages
- WFP, UNICEF and CLEAR AA led a Joint Programme on national evaluation capacity building in anglophone Africa of local YEEs
- UNFPA, FAO, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, IFAD, hosted different events during the [gLocal Evaluation Week](#), including for YEEs.

3.2.4 Knowledge management and communication

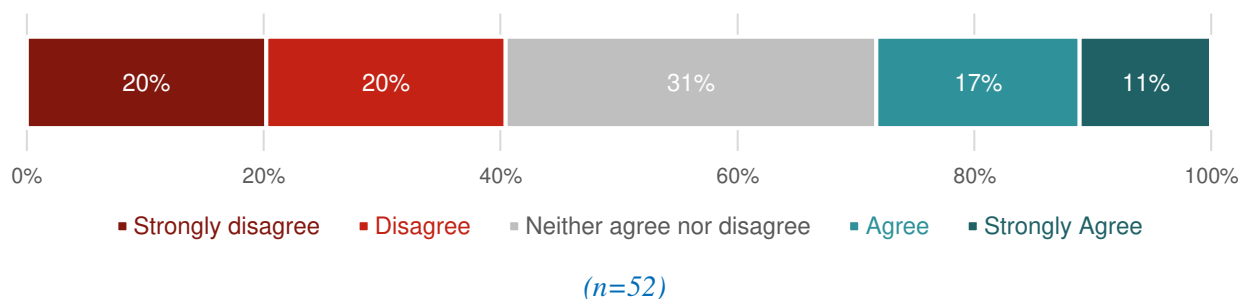
Finding 12. Some organizations provide YEEs access to evaluation networks and conferences, facilitating networking and learning. Regional events were favoured for their cost-effectiveness and accessibility, supporting broader YEEs' participation and professional development.

61. 56% of survey respondents agreed that their organization provides YEEs access to evaluation networks and conferences to engage, network and learn from other YEEs and professionals. As mentioned during the KIIs this support helps internal YEEs build valuable connections, enhance their skills, and stay updated with

the latest trends in evaluation. YEEs also testified to gaining a high level of visibility and encouragement by participating in the networking events, especially in jointly organised conference panels.

62. Most KII informants agreed that there is a growing need for more frequent knowledge sharing events for evaluators within the UN. Only 28% of survey respondents indicated that their organization hosts knowledge sharing and advocacy events for YEEs. Yet, these sessions allow to share knowledge between YEEs and also strengthen connections. The [peer to peer sessions](#) organised by some FGD participants with the support of UNFPA were highly appreciated for example.

Figure 16: 28% of survey respondents' organization host knowledge sharing and advocacy events for YEEs



63. However, most respondents and interviewees preferred regional events, as they are less expensive and more accessible compared to the global events, allowing organizations to better support YEEs participation. These regional gatherings can provide cost-effective opportunities for young evaluators to engage in professional development, network with peers, and exchange knowledge. By focusing on regional events, organizations can maximise their resources and ensure a wider reach, facilitating the inclusion and growth of YEEs across diverse geographical areas. Moreover, KII informants stated that internal YEEs as well as their senior colleagues, benefit a lot also from participating in informal local evaluation meetings in the cities where UN agencies are present. For example, such events were hosted in Vienna.

64. Finally, KII informants highlighted that during the 2023 UNEG Annual General Meeting, face-to-face sessions on meaningful YEE engagement and peer learning drew attention from both YEEs and senior evaluators, prompting at least 6 informants to reconsider their approach to youth engagement in evaluation.

Good practices for communications and knowledge management to enhance YEEs engagement:

- The Youth in Evaluation Initiative co-led by **UNFPA, EvalYouth, and the Global Parliamentarian Forum**, convened over 200 stakeholders, including UN agencies, to emphasise the critical role of meaningfully involving youth in evaluation.
- **UNFPA** is one of the founding partners of the [Peer2Peer initiative](#) with regular sessions in different parts of the world. In 2023, IFAD hosted the [Peer2Peer advisory session for YEEs](#). The Peer2Peer Career Advisory Sessions provide a safe, online space for young evaluators to discuss career opportunities and M&E challenges through a demand-driven Q&A format.
- **UNFPA** documented lessons learned from the meaningful participation of youth in an evaluation process. This led to the publication of the lessons learned paper: "[Meaningful youth engagement in evaluation: Multiplying the transformative power of evaluation, Lessons from UNFPA experience](#)" (2023).
- **UNFPA** regularly supports the participation of YEEs in conferences organized by regional evaluation associations (EES, AEA, AFREA, ReLAC, RFE²²), and global events such as the Global evaluation forums,

²² See footnote 5 above.

Global Parliamentarians' Forums, etc.

- **UNDP** organises bi-annual conferences on National Evaluation Capacities, where YEEs outside the organization can participate through the provision of scholarships.

3.2.5 Human resources

Finding 13. Only a few organizations have included positions in their terms of reference for young entry-level employees (with less than 5 years of experience). Most often, this requirement serves as a minimum eligibility criterion, which then allows more experienced candidates to apply.

65. Only a few organizations have specifically incorporated positions in ToRs²³ for YEEs with less than 5 years of experience. UNFPA and UNICEF are consistently applying the policy of engagement of YEEs in their evaluations. UNESCO, UNHCR, and OHCHR have also adopted the practice of hiring YEEs as consultants for particular evaluations. However, agencies frequently set a minimum requirement of 2-3 years of experience for consultancy positions. As a result, these roles often attract more experienced candidates who meet the minimum criteria and who although, overqualified, seize this opportunity given the difficulty in identifying more senior positions in the UN. This phenomenon limits opportunities for less experienced YEEs to secure such positions. This approach undermines efforts to create entry-level opportunities for young evaluators and may hinder the development of a sustainable talent pipeline within the organization.

Finding 14. Sometimes, "junior" or "youth" positions can hinder the career growth of young employees, as they may be less trusted and excluded from the decision-making processes.

66. As mentioned by YEEs during the KIIs and FGDs, sometimes, "junior" or "youth" positions can unintentionally hinder the career growth of young professionals by perpetuating a perception of inexperience and unreliability. These roles often come with limited responsibilities and exclude young evaluators from critical decision-making processes, preventing them from demonstrating their full potential. As a result, young professionals may find it challenging to gain the trust and recognition necessary to advance their careers within the organization and be recruited on more senior posts.

"I joined the organization 3 years ago as a junior analyst. Even if I am skilful enough and know all the work well, I am placed in minor roles, like note-taking, with rare possibility to show my expertise." - YEE

"I became a fellow when I already had like 8 years of experience in consultancy sector in evaluation, but I am still treated as a junior, without the possibility to grow even if only through gaining more responsibilities, without changing positions" - YEE

Finding 15: The limited number and diversity of YEEs in rosters hinder managers from hiring them.

67. As mentioned in KII, despite their commitment, some evaluation managers, particularly from agencies with small evaluation functions, reported difficulties in finding YEEs, especially local ones, for assignments. The main reason is identified as YEEs not being included in readily available and easily accessible rosters and

²³ The statement is confirmed by the author's review of a sample of ToRs (10 per agency) and KIIs.

the low visibility of YEE networks, which can link organizations to local YEEs. This challenge is experienced in some regions more than others. For example, the informant mentioned Central Asia, the Pacific islands, and countries like the Gambia and Sierra Leone.²⁴

“We want to have more local youth in evaluations, but with such time constraints and limited resources, we just can't find proper people. We don't have evaluation officers at the national level who would go to the universities or find young evaluators in other ways. Other agencies do not want to share their roster of young professionals, if they have any.” - Senior evaluation manager

68. Evaluators from agencies with national offices face fewer challenges finding suitable YEEs. Senior evaluators from UNFPA and UNICEF noted that local YEE networks or VOPE are the primary starting points for finding young professionals.

“Each assignment we share widely with YEE network and VOPE, this is a must to start.” - Senior evaluator

69. In contrast, evaluators from UNDP highlighted a sufficient number of YEEs in the roster and a high responsiveness of YEEs from the Global South to assignment announcements.

“We've never had a problem in finding a proper YEE, always received thousands of candidates and could choose the best suitable ones.” -Senior evaluator

Good practices for mobilising human resources – YEEs

Organizations implement various strategies to mobilise human resources to broaden the pool of young professionals:

- **UNITAR** collaborates with the University of Antwerp (Master programme on development evaluation) to find candidates for internships with multicultural backgrounds.
- **UNESCO** collaborates with several universities in Paris, by delivering presentations and organising sessions on evaluation practice.
- **Green Climate Fund** collaborates with Yonsei University in South Korea, where evaluation interns organise events and promote opportunities for YEEs.
- **UNFPA** partners with EvalYouth globally, regionally, and nationally, and disseminates job opportunities through these channels.
- **WFP UNICEF and CLEAR AA** have a joint programme on YEE capacity building and created a pool of YEEs. They have been hired for different assignments in the region.

3.2.6 Financial resources

Finding 16. Between 2015 and 2023, many agencies shifted from unpaid to paid internships to support young professionals. Nonetheless, unpaid internships still exist in the UN. Some agencies prefer selecting interns enrolled in university internship programmes that are unpaid. There is a growing trend of engaging

²⁴ These geographical locations were mentioned by informants; this mapping exercise did not analyse the visibility of YEEs networks or YEEs capacities outside the UNEG agencies.

70. As stated by KII and FGDs informants during the 2015-2023 most agencies have made significant progress in transitioning from unpaid to paid internships, often providing allowances to support young professionals. This shift demonstrates a growing recognition of the value and contributions of interns, as well as a commitment to equal access to professional opportunities. Pushed by interns' [recurrent strikes](#) and the UN General Assembly resolution on human resources management (April 2023), many agencies reviewed their policies regarding hiring interns and offered allowance to the interns.

71. However, the issue of [unpaid internships remains in the UN Secretariat](#), and as stated by KII/FGD informants predominantly in New York and Geneva headquarters offices. Policy inconsistencies and the high supply of “free” work force can limit the implementation of paid internship programmes. Addressing this disparity is crucial to ensure that all interns, regardless of their location and financial status, receive fair compensation for their work and can fully engage in their roles.

“I don't know who can afford to live in New York and work full time as an intern. We have such interns, and the supply is high. Mostly they are children of UN staff or local celebrities. All from the Global North” - Senior evaluator

“I can't see anyone from Africa among our interns, we have only Global North interns, who have funds. Daughters and sons from my country will not be here.” - Senior evaluator

72. Although in most agencies beyond the UN Secretariat, the paid internships are written in new policies, some agencies prefer interns who are sponsored through university fellowships, who would not require the organization allocating additional budget to recruit them.

“We do not have a budget for interns. We take [them] from university. They provide budgets for internships; we provide space and mentoring. We always have a lot of competition, more good candidates than we can accommodate.” - Senior evaluator

73. Even though it is difficult to count the exact number of YEEs working as UN Volunteers²⁵, the KIIs informants stated that this form of YEE engagement recently became more popular, including UN Youth²⁶ assignments.

Finding 17. Most organizations financially support internal YEEs through salaries or allowances, but they rarely allocate dedicated budgets for YEEs outside the organization. As a result, external YEEs are often offered unpaid roles, such as participation in reference groups and advisory boards.

74. Most organizations financially support internal YEEs by paying salaries or allowances, ensuring their active participation. However, they rarely allocate dedicated budgets for external YEEs, limiting opportunities for young evaluators outside the organization to engage meaningfully in UN evaluation processes. External YEEs are often offered unpaid roles, such as participating in reference groups or advisory boards, hindering their ability to contribute effectively and develop professionally.

²⁵ UN Volunteers track statistics based on the SDGs to which positions contribute, rather than by sphere of activity. Additionally, evaluation roles can have various titles, making it difficult to accurately track the extent of YEE engagement.

²⁶ UNV Youth limits assignments for youth between the ages of 18 and 26.

“I was engaged with different UN organizations in reference groups and committees, because I understand how it works. But I don't want to anymore. It is good for connections, but takes a lot of time and is not paid” - YEE

Good practices in providing financial resources for YEEs engagement

Initiatives aimed at supporting YEEs include innovative approaches to financial support within UN agencies. These efforts underscore the necessity of having dedicated budget commitments to enhance diversity, inclusion, and professional growth among youth in evaluation roles. Examples of these practices include:

- UNV's [Monitoring and Evaluation Joint Programme of UN Agencies](#) (2019) for hiring YEEs in 2019. It aimed to strengthen evaluation capacities across multiple UN entities while providing valuable opportunities for young professionals to enter the UN career as UN Youth or UN Specialist in monitoring and evaluation. In 2023, the partnership was reignited by the UNEG working group on young and emerging evaluators and UNV. In the 2024 cycle, 12 assignments were published as part of the partnership. UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO and OHCHR hired 8 YEEs through this mechanism. The recruitment process for the remaining four assignments (UNICEF, WFP, UNU and UNDP) is ongoing and should be finalized in early 2025. 42% of recruits are women.
- UNFPA provided stipends to members of the Youth Steering Committee of the evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth.
- OHCHR established the “Promoting Diversity and Inclusion for Youth in the Secretariat” also known as ‘Ditch UNfair Internships’ project which aims to pave the way for young candidates, including young evaluators from developing economies to gain experience as UN Volunteers, while simultaneously promoting a more diverse and inclusive work environment. A key component of this initiative is its commitment to paid internships recognizing that financial barriers limit access to individuals from less advantaged backgrounds. By providing stipends and compensation for their work, OHCHR is helping to dismantle the structural inequalities that have long been associated with unpaid internships.

4. Conclusions

75. **Conclusion 1** Individual UN agencies are perceived as more open to youth involvement by both YEEs and senior evaluators, compared to the UN system as a whole. There is a gap in aligning youth inclusion efforts across organizational functions. Although many agencies include youth as a stakeholder group in their strategic programme documents, only a few incorporate youth-focused efforts into evaluation strategies. This is in part hindered by organizational and financial constraints

76. **Conclusion 2:** Although, in UNEG agencies, YEEs typically represent less than 20% of evaluation employees²⁷, both YEEs and senior evaluators agree on the significant value YEEs bring to the evaluation process. Young evaluators emphasise their passion, mobility, and fresh perspectives, while senior evaluators recognize YEEs’ innovative ideas, tech skills, and diverse viewpoints. Both groups agreed that YEEs' energy, creativity, and tech-savviness are vital for innovating and enriching evaluations.

77. **Conclusion 3:** Despite appreciating the diverse experiences and development opportunities they have through their engagement with the UN, YEEs encounter barriers to access these positions such as high entry requirements, intense competition, and underutilization of their skills. Minimum experience requirements, often without an upper limit, tend to attract more experienced candidates. This practice limits opportunities for

²⁷ Including both external and internal employees.

less experienced evaluators and hinders the start of their careers. Furthermore, while most agencies have shifted from unpaid to paid internships, acknowledging the value of young professionals, unpaid internships still exist in the UN Secretariat.

78. **Conclusion 4:** Proactive individual managers play a crucial role in fostering meaningful youth involvement in the evaluation process. They provide mentoring, support training, support YEEs visibility and facilitate their inclusion into decision making. This role is especially important in mitigating broader organizational limitations such as the lack of formal internship or fellowship structures, budget constraints, or lack of previous engagement practices for YEEs in the office.

79. **Conclusion 5:** Internal YEEs play a significant role in the evaluation process, with high participation rates and valuable remote engagement options. However, many external YEEs are not fully involved, leading to unacknowledged contributions in reports. Structured approaches such as mentoring and internships are essential for maximising the development of young evaluation experts in UN agencies.

80. **Conclusion 6:** The survey found that many organizations support local partners to enhance youth evaluation capacities, but only a small percentage engage with VOPEs. There are missed collaboration opportunities due to inactive or absent VOPEs. Resources for youth involvement in evaluation are dispersed, hindering easy access. While training opportunities for YEEs are available, mentoring support is perceived as lacking. 66% of respondents noted that their organizations provide YEEs access to evaluation networks and conferences, with regional events being favoured for their cost-effectiveness and accessibility.

81. **Conclusion 7:** The inclusion of positions for young entry-level employees is limited, and often these positions serve as a minimum eligibility criterion for more experienced candidates. Additionally, "junior" or "youth" positions can hinder the career growth of young employees and limit their involvement in decision-making processes. The limited number and diversity of young entry-level employees in rosters also hinders managers from hiring them.

5. Suggested actions

UNEG YEE Group:

1. Consolidate all capacity-building materials for engaging youth in evaluation into a single, easily accessible section on the UNEG website. Summarise materials and create short to-do lists for meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation.
2. Establish structured mentorship programs and engage YEEs through the UNEG network.

UNEG:

3. Incorporate the requirement to include a youth perspective into the UNEG peer review process
4. Include youth participation in the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and other relevant UNEG guidance materials.
5. Encourage UN agencies to assess their performance against the Standards on Youth in Evaluation on an annual basis
6. Promote cross-organizational learning opportunities and specialised training workshops to enhance peer learning and skill development and include YEEs in these events
7. Create rosters of YEEs that could be hired for or consulted in UNEG evaluation processes and share them between UNEG agencies. (e.g. roster of young consultants, roster for youth advisory groups)

Leadership of Evaluation Offices of UNEG agencies:

8. Include youth engagement in evaluation in the Evaluation Policy and Strategy
9. Include a dedicated budget for youth engagement in evaluation budgets, including to hire a young evaluator in external evaluation teams.

YEEs:

10. Join the UNEG YEE working group and actively contribute to the discussions and activities.

6. Annexes:

[Annex 1. The concept note of the mapping exercise](#)

[Annex 2. Methodology](#)

[Annex 3. The list of reviewed documents](#)

[Annex 4. The list of KII and FGD participants](#)