YOUTH, PEACE & SECURITY AGENDA AND MINE ACTION IN COLOMBIA

Outcome Report, November 2025

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CCCM	The Colombian Campaign Against Landmines
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EORE	Explosive ordnance risk education
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
OCCP-AICMA	The Oficina Consejera Comisionada de Paz – Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonales
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

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INTRODUCTION

A workshop was convened to strengthen the integration of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda within Colombia's mine action sector at a moment when youth leadership is increasingly recognized as essential to sustaining peace and supporting recovery in explosive ordnance (EO)-affected communities. Colombia's peacebuilding landscape is evolving, with ongoing commitments to territorial stabilization, community resilience, and inclusive security policies. Together, these efforts strengthen social cohesion by fostering trust between citizens and institutions, reducing inequalities across regions, and creating shared conditions for safety, participation, and collective well-being. In this context, young people are playing visible roles as community mobilizers, educators, innovators, and advocates. Yet, despite their proximity to the challenges and opportunities in affected areas, their contributions remain insufficiently supported or systematically incorporated into mine action efforts. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the Colombian Campaign Against Landmines (CCCM) designed the workshop in November 2025 to deepen shared understanding of why youth engagement matters, and to build a foundation for more structured, meaningful participation aligned with national YPS priorities.

The need for this workshop emerged from both a practical and strategic gap. While youth networks and local organizations have been advancing initiatives related to explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), community preparedness, survivor support, and local peacebuilding, these experiences have not been consistently connected to institutional mine action processes or policy development. At the same time, mine action actors—government institutions, operators, and donors—are seeking to ensure that their work is responsive to community needs, conflict-sensitive, and aligned with broader national commitments to inclusion. Creating a dedicated space for dialogue, joint reflection, and collaborative design enabled youth leaders and institutional stakeholders to articulate shared priorities, build trust, and co-develop actionable recommendations. The workshop therefore served as a critical step toward strengthening coordination, enhancing the legitimacy of youth perspectives, and embedding YPS principles more fully within mine action programming in Colombia.

The workshop also took place at a particularly important moment for national policy development. Colombia is in the process of designing its first national YPS plan, a significant milestone that offers an opportunity to institutionalize youth participation across peace and security sectors. However, early consultations have highlighted a significant gap: mine action is not yet viewed as a core element of peace and security in Colombia, nor have the unique roles youth can play—whether in advocacy, EORE, victim assistance, or land clearance—been fully recognized. Additionally, 2025 marks the tenth anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 2250, which first established the global YPS agenda. This anniversary provides a timely reminder of the commitments made to recognize youth as partners in peace—and underscores the urgency of ensuring that Colombia's evolving YPS framework reflects the realities of communities still living with the impacts of explosive ordnance.

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PARTICIPATION

Organized by the GICHD and the CCCM, the workshop brought together 16 young leaders from across Colombia. Participants represented a wide range of regions, including Bogotá, Samaniego (Nariño), Cúcuta (Norte de Santander), Inzá (Cauca), Tumaco (Nariño), Puerto Asís and Puerto Caicedo (Putumayo), Nariño (Antioquia), and Hocari (Norte de Santander). The diversity of organizations was equally notable, spanning local, national, and international levels. Local victim assistance and survivor associations were represented by ADTESIN, ASOU Abades, and ASOVIVIR. National organizations included the CCCM and the Scouts Association of Colombia. International organizations and operators present were the HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion, and UNICEF. Fundación LATIR also participated on behalf of the Colombian Coalition for Youth, Peace, and Security.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30, with balanced gender representation—50% women and 50% men. Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities as well as EO survivors were also represented.

On the third day of the workshop, the group was joined by two representatives from the Oficina Consejera Comisionada de Paz – Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonales (OCCP-AICMA) and one representative from UNMAS.



Workshop participants, Bogota, Colombia, November 2025 © CCCM

METHOD

The workshop followed a structured and participatory approach designed to deepen understanding of why the YPS agenda is essential to mine action, to identify good practices of youth engagement, and to co-create concrete recommendations for strengthening youth participation in the sector. Through a combination of interactive methods—including storytelling circles, group mapping exercises, a synergy-mapping wall (see Annex A), world café discussions, and problem-solving scenarios—participants explored the links between YPS pillars and mine action, shared real-world experiences, and analysed barriers and enablers to meaningful youth involvement. Building on this foundation, youth participants worked in thematic groups to design actionable recommendations under each YPS pillar, later presenting these to a wider group of stakeholders for validation and refinement. The overall flow ensured a progression from shared understanding, to collective analysis, to the development of practical, youth-driven proposals to enhance inclusive and effective mine action in Colombia.

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RESULTS

Why youth should be involved in mine action

Participants identified a wide range of reasons why youth engagement is essential to mine action, emphasizing both the unique strengths young people bring and the broader social and peacebuilding benefits that result. Youth were described as carriers of ancestral and indigenous knowledge, capable of strengthening traditional practices while also contributing fresh perspectives informed by their strong understanding of diversity and inclusion. Their involvement was seen as improving community engagement and supporting conflict prevention, particularly through their ability to integrate risk education with messages of peaceful communication and problem-solving. Because young people are often the most effective communicators with children and adolescents, participants noted that youth-led EORE can reach audiences that are otherwise difficult to engage, shifting attitudes and enabling safer behaviors among younger generations.

Youth engagement was also highlighted as transformative for victim assistance and land release. Participants shared that peer-to-peer mentoring among young survivors provides empathetic, informed, and relatable support that improves the emotional recovery of victims. They noted that when children and adolescents see youth working as deminers or in victim assistance roles, it challenges stereotypes about what youth can do and inspires aspirations for more peaceful and community-centered futures. Moreover, employing youth as deminers not only contributes to safer communities but provides meaningful employment, financial stability, and social recognition for young people—factors that can reduce recruitment into armed groups, illicit trade, and strengthen community cohesion. When young people are visibly engaged in a mission that protects civilians and restores access to land, schools, and livelihoods, they shift from being perceived as a potential risk group to being recognized as contributors and protectors. This fosters greater trust between youth, local authorities, and community members, reducing inter-generational tensions and rebuilding confidence in shared institutions. In this way, mine action becomes a platform for youth to forge new social networks, model non-violent roles, and reinforce a sense of collective responsibility and shared future—key pillars of long-term community trust.

Finally, youth engagement in advocacy was seen as both necessary and powerful. Participants emphasized that young people claim ownership of Colombia's future and feel a responsibility to take action even though they were not the primary actors in past conflict. They highlighted the strength of Colombia's existing youth organizations, which can mobilize communities, amplify mine action priorities, and ensure that policies reflect the realities of younger generations. Overall, the discussion underscored that meaningful youth engagement in mine action is not only a matter of inclusion but a strategic investment in peace, safety, and long-term resilience across Colombia's EO-affected territories.

How can youth be engaged in mine action?

Youth representatives highlighted the important role that mine action actors must play in enabling meaningful youth participation. They stressed that stakeholders need to "open the door" by proactively creating spaces and opportunities for youth to contribute across all pillars of mine action. This includes hiring youth and also ensuring that young people are genuinely heard and

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that their insights are taken seriously within technical discussions and decision-making processes. Participants emphasized that mine action actors must also commit to engaging a diverse range of youth—recognizing differences in disability, gender, language, geographic location, conflict exposure, and Indigenous identity—to ensure that youth participation reflects the realities of Colombia's varied territories and communities.

Participants reflected on the role of youth themselves in strengthening their engagement in mine action. They noted that many young people do not always feel they have the "right" knowledge to contribute to technical discussions, which can limit their participation even when they have valuable lived experience. Building confidence in their existing knowledge and perspectives was seen as essential, alongside expanding access to information through awareness campaigns, knowledge platforms, technical tables, and social media. Participants emphasized that youth should also be encouraged and supported to generate their own ideas for engagement, drawing on successful examples such as the Colombian Scout programme, which has helped shift perceptions about careers that women should have.

Recommended actions for mine action stakeholders to engage youth in mine actions

Advocacy

Recommendation 1: Explicitly include Comprehensive Action Against Anti-Personnel Mines (AICMA) in Colombia's YPS National Action Plan and ensure that youth—particularly indigenous and Afro Colombian communities and those from affected territories—participate in the design of the National Action Plan.

This action calls for the National YPS Action Plan to formally recognise the differentiated impact of EO on young people and to integrate mine action areas (specifically EORE, humanitarian demining, victim assistance) within its commitments. Responsibility for advancing this inclusion lies with the Ministry of Equality and Equity, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNFPA as co-leaders of the YPS Plan, in coordination with OCCP AICMA, youth organisations, survivor networks, and community actors who can bring territorial perspectives into policy design. The expected impact is a stronger, more comprehensive National YPS Plan that reflects the lived realities of youth in EO-affected areas, recognises the essential contribution of mine action to peacebuilding, and ensures that young people—who are both disproportionately affected and actively engaged in mine action activities—are meaningfully involved in shaping policies that promote safety, mobility, dignity, and long-term peace in their territories. This recommendation was immediately acted upon and the youth participants drafted a letter to the YPS national action plan drafting team to include mine action in the plan (see Annex B).

Mine action is recognized as a foundational step in peacebuilding, and the Colombian peace plan explicitly highlights it as the first stage in the reconstruction process.[1] By prioritizing the removal of

[1] The *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace* (2016), signed between the

EOs, communities can safely reclaim their land, rebuild livelihoods, and restore trust in institutions. This approach underscores that peace is not only about ending armed conflict but also about creating the conditions for sustainable development and reconciliation. The Colombian peace plan demonstrates that without mine action, other elements of peacebuilding—such as infrastructure development, agricultural recovery, and social reintegration—cannot fully take root.

Land release

Recommendation 1: Increase the recruitment of youth—particularly those from diverse ethnic backgrounds and young survivors of landmine accidents—in survey and clearance teams.

Responsibility for advancing this action lies with humanitarian demining operators, OCCP AICMA, ethnic authorities, youth councils, and survivor organizations, who must create accessible entry pathways for youth, collect data on youth hired in demining roles, and involve young people in technical working groups determining clearance priorities. There is a need for operators to collect and share data on the age of the youth deminers and for OCCP AICMA to collect this data. The expected impact is a more inclusive and community-grounded demining process that draws on the knowledge, mobility, and motivation of youth, strengthens trust between operators and affected communities, and reinforces humanitarian demining as a meaningful pathway to peace and community resilience in Colombia.

Victim assistance

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the information system for mine action by integrating age-disaggregated data to ensure youth victims and survivors are properly identified.

This recommendation proposes adapting the national mine action database so that information on youth is systematically collected, categorized, and analyzed. Doing so would allow practitioners to understand risk behaviors, trends, and gaps affecting young people. OCCP AICMA, particularly the cross-cutting approaches team and the information management teams, holds primary responsibility for updating the data structure, with operators and NGOs, and survivor organizations supporting accurate registration at community level. The expected impact is a clearer picture of the scale and characteristics of youth affected by EO, enabling better prioritization in policies, targeted prevention messages, and more responsive programming that addresses their distinct needs.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that the new Victim Assistance National Mine Action Standard meaningfully incorporates youth perspectives from the outset.

This recommendation calls for formally engaging youth—especially young survivors, youth-led organizations, and youth advocates—in consultations, drafting workshops, and validation processes for the upcoming National victim assistance standard. The responsibility lies with OCCP AICMA and the technical teams leading the standard's development, supported by NGOs, community organizations, and youth networks that can facilitate participation and contribute lived experience. The expected impact is a Victim Assistance National Mine Action Standard that is

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more inclusive, aligned with the realities of young survivors, and reflective of the diverse ways youth can contribute to prevention, care, recovery, and community leadership within victim assistance.

Recommendation 3: Institutionalize youth participation in peer to peer psycho-emotional support systems for victims and survivors, integrating youth into psychosocial first aid and related wellbeing mechanisms.

This recommendation falls within the Relief and Recovery pillar of the YPS. It focuses on embedding youth engagement in psychosocial first aid, emotional support programmes, and school- or community-based wellbeing initiatives, recognizing that many young people are situated in education settings where these interventions can be scaled. The Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, educational institutions, NGOs implementing victim assistance services, and youth-led survivor groups all share responsibility for incorporating youth roles within these services. The expected impact is enhanced emotional resilience, reduced long-term psychological harm among young survivors, and stronger community protection networks supported by youth leadership.

Recommendation 4: Expand training and certification opportunities for youth in first response and emergency preparedness for explosive ordnance incidents.

This recommendation aims to equip young people with accredited knowledge and skills in first aid, emergency response, and coordination during explosive incidents—especially important in rural or remote areas where youth are often first responders. Responsibility rests with the OCCP AICMA, the Ministry of Health, medical faculties, the Colombian Red Cross, and NGOs delivering victim assistance, who must develop accessible training pathways and ensure certification standards. The expected impact is more rapid and effective response capacity, reduced long-term physical and psychological impacts for victims, and empowered youth who can contribute directly to safer and more resilient communities.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

Recommendation 1: Promote the active participation of youth as leaders and contributors in Explosive Ordnance Risk Education.

This includes ensuring that youth perspectives—particularly those of young people who have survived explosive incidents—are reflected in the design of EORE communication strategies, including materials, messages, and delivery methods. Youth organizations, community leaders, EORE-implementing partners, and the relevant government entities responsible for mine action should jointly facilitate opportunities for youth to receive accredited training and to participate meaningfully in the development and delivery of EORE activities. By engaging youth as credible messengers and co-designers, EORE programmes can become more relevant, relatable, and responsive to the realities faced by young people in mine-affected areas.

Recommendation 2: Increase youth participation in EORE as beneficiaries through the use of communication methods that align with their interests and information habits.

This involves adapting EORE content and outreach strategies to platforms commonly used by

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youth, including social media, peer-to-peer learning spaces, and youth-led community groups. Government authorities, EORE organizations, and youth networks are collectively responsible for ensuring that EORE messages are communicated in formats that attract and motivate young audiences—for example, integrating themes that resonate with youth interests such as environmental protection, community leadership, or digital innovation, and showcasing respected role models who can influence youth engagement.

Together, these recommendations aim to transform EORE methodologies into more participatory, dynamic, and inclusive approaches that are better tailored to the needs and motivations of young people. By positioning youth both as leaders and as informed beneficiaries, the EORE system is expected to see stronger community participation, improved uptake of safety messages, and more effective risk-mitigation behaviors among younger populations. Ultimately, these actions will enhance the overall impact of EORE in Colombia's EO-affected areas, ensuring that youth are not only protected but also empowered to contribute to safer and more resilient communities.

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REFLECTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

The workshop successfully strengthened participants' understanding of the YPS Agenda and its relevance to mine action and broader peacebuilding efforts. Attendees highlighted the most valuable aspects as the deepened knowledge of YPS, a clearer grasp of the link between mine action and peacebuilding, and the engaging discussions supported by real-world examples. Participants also reported gaining new perspectives, including a broader awareness of humanitarian–security linkages, enhanced advocacy and collaboration skills, and improved insight into policy frameworks and community engagement strategies. Many expressed intentions to share what they learned with colleagues and communities, integrate YPS principles into ongoing projects, and promote greater youth participation in mine action initiatives.

Suggestions for improvement centered on providing a more structured learning format, incorporating additional practical exercises, increasing opportunities for group interaction, and offering further resources for continued learning. Overall, the workshop was described as informative, inspiring, and inclusive, with strong appreciation for the quality of facilitation and enthusiasm for ongoing engagement and future sessions.

When asked which part of the workshop was most valuable participants answered :

"The development of new ideas for mine action, being taken into account as young people, and having the national government listen to us."

"The ability to recognize that we can still be heard, that we can share our ideas, and that if we work together—youth, NGOs, CCCM, and the OCCP AICMA —we can achieve true peace."

"It helped me learn more about the topic, which now allows me to share it with more people in order to generate projects or ideas and become agents of change."

"I'm taking with me a perspective of wanting to go deeper into the topic and becoming an important point of motivation for my organization to participate in and support the process. I have gained skills such as proposing ideas, managing my emotions when presenting, and working as part of a team. I'm also taking with me the understanding that as young people, we can drive major changes."

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NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, the Colombian Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security will send an endorsed and signed copy of the letter to the YPS National Action Plan drafting team (UNFPA, Ministry of Equality and Equity, Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Second, the final outcome report will be shared with mine action stakeholders in Colombia to provide guidance on how to include and engage youth in their operations and strategic thinking. Finally, the results of the workshop will feed into a research and recommendation brief authored by GICHD and CCCM on YPS and mine action, ensuring that lessons learned are captured and inform future policy and practice.

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ANNEX A: LINK BETWEEN MINE ACTION AND YPS BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

		YPS Pillars				
		Participation	**Protection**	**Conflict Prevention**	**Disengagement and Reintegration**	**Partnership Building**
Mine Action Areas	**Advocacy**	Spread information through social media by sharing real stories about the demining process and assistance to victims of the conflict.	Comprehensive advocacy action for security and the end of the conflict.	Visibility of campaigns on social media; inclusion of young people in the creation of differentiated response pathways.	Peace agreement signatories can participate in reconciliation and historical-memory processes, helping to rebuild the social fabric.	Integration of various actors; cross-cutting participation of youth in peace and security issues.
	EORE	Develop disability-inclusive plans for EORE workshops. Ensure that organizations train youth in EORE so that young people themselves can deliver educational workshops, creating long-term and positive impact.	Include young people in EORE spaces to develop youth instructors. Increase EORE capacity through mandatory social service programs in schools. Develop behavior-change messages focused on youth, along with youth training using differential approaches. Allocate funding for differential pedagogical materials. Implement prevention campaigns on social media.	Provide career guidance for young people to help prevent future involvement in violence.	Support the re-signification of their role in the conflict, shifting from armed actors to peacebuilders.	Cooperation of youth with mine-action experts and other media stakeholders.
	Humanitarian Demining	Ethnic guides serving as translators.	Career guidance in fields outside mine action; sharing reports with information collected through NGO interventions in the territories.	Engage more young people and promote training on the demining process; also involve them in demining-related activities to ensure that objectives are met and community rights are respected.	Former combatants, by recognizing where explosive devices are located, can identify them through mapping.	Partnerships with other countries in the use of loudspeakers for hazard communication and social media outreach.
	Victim Assistance	Provide emotional and psychological support to MAP/ERW victims and their families, offering information always under the supervision of experts.	Victim-assistance pathways for explosive-ordnance survivors.	Prevent school dropout; implement mental-health programs.	Labor-reintegration processes, livelihoods support, and economic assistance.	

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This exercise allowed participants to identify the connection between the pillars of humanitarian demining and the core components of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Through collective analysis, they highlighted key points of alignment, potential synergies, and the essential role of young people in peacebuilding and in comprehensive mine-action efforts.

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ANNEX B: LETTER FROM YOUTH GROUPS FOR A YPS PLAN WITH COMPREHENSIVE ACTION AGAINST LANDMINES

Subject: Inclusion of Comprehensive Action Against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA) in Colombia's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)

Addressed to: Ministry of Equality and Equity United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Colombian Foreign Ministry

Sender: Mine Action Working Group of the Colombian Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security.

We, the young people gathered at the workshop "Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Mine Action", organised by the Colombian Campaign Against Landmines and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), affirm that peacebuilding in Colombia is impossible without the full participation of young people and without the explicit inclusion of Comprehensive Action Against Anti-Personnel Mines (AICMA) in the National Action Plan for YPS.

As participants in this workshop, we have joined the Colombian YPS Coalition, a youth platform that brings together various organisations, leaders and processes working to implement the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in the country. We have joined the Coalition to ensure that it includes representation from young people involved in Comprehensive Action Against Mines, because we consider it essential that the experiences, risks, lessons learned and contributions of young people who live or work in mine-affected areas are part of the development of the National Plan and decision-making spaces.

We speak from territories where anti-personnel mines continue to limit mobility, affect access to education, block productive projects and put our lives and those of our communities at risk. We speak from the pain of those who have been victims, from the resistance of those who continue to fight for the life and dignity of communities, and from the conviction that young people are key actors in the transformation of the country.

We therefore call on the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security to explicitly recognise the differentiated impact of mines on young people and to incorporate measures for prevention, care and reparation.

Comprehensive Action Against Anti-Personnel Mines is a peace strategy in itself.

Humanitarian demining, mine risk education, victim assistance and the restoration of safe territories are processes that build peace, transform realities and enable a return to a dignified life. Young people, as demonstrated in the workshop, have actively participated in these processes and we want this work to be recognised within the YPS approach.

Within the framework of the dialogue between young people, Comprehensive Action Against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA) and the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, we identified a direct

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relationship between the operational pillars of AICMA and the strategic pillars of YPS, which demonstrates why Comprehensive Mine Action should be included in the National Action Plan.

We demand that our voices be part of the design of the National Plan: The spirit of Resolution 2250 emphasises that peace cannot be built without the effective participation of young people. For this reason, we formally request that a strategic line on Youth + Comprehensive Action Against Mines be included in the Plan and that the work of youth organisations working on prevention, education and community support in mined areas be recognised and strengthened.

We also request that the YPS National Action Plan adopt an intersectional and gender-based approach that allows for the identification and addressing of the differentiated inequalities faced by indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural youth, young women, and LGBTIQ+ persons in the context of mine action. The integration of these diversities is key to ensuring that prevention, protection, and participation measures are relevant, culturally sensitive, and effective.

As young people committed to peace, we affirm that there can be no human security as long as a single territory remains contaminated by mines. We have written this letter because we believe in a Colombia where we can walk freely, study without fear, cultivate the land without risk and live in our territories in peace.

The YPS National Plan is a historic opportunity to recognise that peacebuilding must include mine action. We are ready to contribute, engage in dialogue and work for a safe, just and peaceful country.

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