



5 FEBRUARY 2025 | UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK

2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

From Margins to Changemakers: Girls Empowered through Leadership Training and Travel

5 February 2025 | 13:15 - 14:30 | 2nd Fl, 4 W 43rd St, New York, NY 10036
(Hybrid, Off-Site)

*Organized by: International Association of Youth and Students for Peace &
Girls Empowered by Travel - Nepal; co-sponsored by the
Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, UN Major Group for Children and Youth, and HJ
International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership*

Background on the Event

International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) and Girls Empowered by Travel (GET) Nepal convened this event to demonstrate the power of travel-based leadership programs as tools for education, empowerment, and sustainable community development. These programs equip young women with essential skills, boost their confidence, and prepare them to become change-makers in their communities. Through this event, the success of the collaboration between GET-Nepal and IAYSP was showcased as a model for creating ripple effects of empowerment. The event highlighted how grassroots initiatives can lead to meaningful, long-term social change by fostering leadership skills and promoting community engagement. In December 2024, IAYSP and GET-Nepal partnered to deliver hands-on leadership programming in Nepal, illustrating how locally driven initiatives can have a global impact when properly supported and scaled. The event aimed to inspire action by encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships to expand and support similar initiatives worldwide. By fostering innovative, inclusive partnerships, it called for greater investment in strategies that empower girls and contribute to advancing gender equality globally. The event also sought to emphasize

how travel-based leadership programs can serve as powerful tools for education, empowerment, and community development. By demonstrating measurable impacts on SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG11, and SDG 17, the event underscored the importance of targeted empowerment strategies for marginalized women and girls. Furthermore, it sought to inspire action by encouraging multi-stakeholder commitments to support similar programs globally, fostering innovative and inclusive partnerships.

Key Issues Discussed

- The impact of grassroots leadership programs in empowering women and girls.
- The success of the Hitaishi Rural Urban Intercultural Exchange Program in fostering leadership and community-driven initiatives.
- The role of adult literacy programs in promoting autonomy and inspiring additional social initiatives like campaigns against child marriage.
- Leadership boot camp training as a model for personal development and community transformation.
- Strategies for securing government and institutional support for grassroots programs.
- Challenges faced in community engagement, including overcoming skepticism and building trust.
- The importance of partnerships and personal connections in achieving meaningful social change.
- The need for gender-transformative education and climate action to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Key Recommendations for Action

- **Scale grassroots leadership programs** while maintaining a localized approach, ensuring cultural relevance and community ownership in diverse regions.
- **Strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships** by fostering collaboration between governments, civil society, businesses, and grassroots organizations to enhance the reach and sustainability of youth-led initiatives.
- **Elevate the voices of girls and young women** in decision-making processes, integrating their perspectives into gender equality policies, ensuring that youth perspectives shape policies and actions.
- **Leverage storytelling and lived experiences** to highlight program successes, demonstrating impact and fostering greater engagement from policymakers and funders.
- **Ensure accountability and transparency** in grassroots initiatives through robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks, building trust with local communities and international stakeholders.
- **Harness media and technology** to amplify awareness, expand outreach, and mobilize global support for youth-driven leadership and empowerment programs.