

# Youth Leadership

*In Conflict Resolution, Peace Building and Governance*

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**CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** In every community, society or nation, youths play important and indispensable roles. In most instances, youths are considered precious jewels or future leaders. In time of conflicts, youths play leading roles either as participants to perpetrate violence or as participants to promote resolution related programs for the common good of communities or societies. It is said that people love to listen to people of their peer and youths being the majority in our society; youth leadership is absolutely significant in terms of finding resolution to conflicts in our country and should not be overlooked. Conflict is a natural phenomenon of life and there is no way one can avoid it, but what is important is, it can be resolved. At the peak of the civil conflict in Liberia, youths were greatly involved in the peace conferences in and out of Liberia to resolve the conflict. As a result youths have come to be recognized as peacemakers and few salient examples are Rufus Neufville in the past NTGL Assembly and Kemea Weeks. While it is clear that youths were used to perpetrate the war in Liberia, it was the youths who had worked so hard to resolve the civil conflict. As evidence of this fact since youths are considered future leaders, there are now many youth organizations such as FLY, MRU Youth Parliament, etc., which are currently stakeholders to the resolution in our country. It has always been through youths that barriers set by ethnic, religious groups are broken.

**PEACE BUILDING:** In order for the resolution of conflicts in any given society or community to be successful, the peace must be built. Peace building is very essential when conflicts are resolved. Without peace, effort to resolve conflicts will be in vain. Youth leadership in peace building is just as important as youth leadership. Conflict resolution thus entails confidence building in individual parties to the conflict. It is always through the leadership of youths that peace building is made possible, through sports, concerts, community related activities, etc. For example, about 75% of our police force comprises youth and most of these youths are providing leadership at most levels of the paramilitary now. It was through the leadership of youths that most of our ethnic, religious, tribal conflicts have got to be resolved through institutions like CCC Youth Desk, LMYC, YMCA, Youth Council, etc.

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**GOVERNANCE:** may be good or bad. When it is bad, the result is always conflict. Good governance is characterized by accountability, rule of law, equity, participation, and transparency. If there must be peace and stability, youths are to be taught to be prepared to lead in the governance of our society in order to maintain the peace. As you may be aware, most of the drivers around town today are youths, because of this, the safety regulation recently announced is taking root. If there must be good governance, youths must be allowed to play a leading role so that they can learn to be accountable, and transparent, obey the rule of law and participate in the democratic process. If there must be good governance, youths must be allowed to be accountable, obey the rule of laws, participate, and be transparent and to distribute equitably whatever resources for a whole. For the stability or maintenance of this hard earned peace, principles and rules or laws should be put into place to guide the peace that youth leadership has built. The means by which this is put into the proper perspective is governance. Again we can safely say that governance of this society largely depends on the leadership of the youths.

To conclude, youth leadership, conflict resolution, peace building and governance should not be overlooked in society, but should be given attention and consideration. It is only then we will realize peace, security and development. In order to build our peace, youth leadership was used to carry out the peace messages in various communities to educate other members of the society including youth. Example, the Election education was carried out through the leadership of Georgia Brutini and others. At the Talking Drum Studio, you will agree with me that the success of the program over the years can be traced to the leading roles of youth to carry peace messages.