

NOTETAKING FRAMEWORK

#YouthLead Dialogues		
Organizing entity: Wellness Play (youth-led nonprofit using cooperative play and intergenerational dialogue to measurably improve mental health, belonging, and family/community connection) Organizer's email: MaxNguyen@WellnessPlay.org . Country/region: USA, Turkey, Pakistan		Location: Virtual
Event type: <input type="checkbox"/> Self-organized <input type="checkbox"/> Part of existing agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinated by UN partner <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Duration: 64 min		Format: <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual <input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid
Total Number of participants: 31		Number of youth (15-35) participants: 29
Groups present		<input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic minority <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous youth <input type="checkbox"/> LGBTIQ+ youth <input type="checkbox"/> National minority <input type="checkbox"/> Racial minority <input type="checkbox"/> Migrant, refugee or IDP youth <input type="checkbox"/> Youth in conflict-affected areas <input type="checkbox"/> Youth with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Young participants' affiliation		<input type="checkbox"/> Civil society or youth-led organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector or entrepreneurship <input type="checkbox"/> Academia, research, or education institution <input type="checkbox"/> Public sector or government <input type="checkbox"/> International organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Third sector <input type="checkbox"/> Media, arts, or creative industries <input type="checkbox"/> Community or grassroots organizing <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Thematic focus		<input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger and poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Armed conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile delinquency <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure-time activities <input type="checkbox"/> Girls and young women <input type="checkbox"/> Globalization <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Full and effective participation of youth in society <input type="checkbox"/> Information and communications technology <input type="checkbox"/> Intergenerational issues <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Youth Mental Health
Today's Realities	What do you think young people are prioritizing today?	When we talked, the theme that kept coming up was building our futures. Many of us, particularly those from the Bay Area, are heavily focused on preparing for college and achieving top grades, testing, awards and activities. At our schools, the environment can feel unhealthily competitive, and teens need a way to connect with

		<p>each other outside of this context. What goes unsaid is the atmosphere of stress, anxiety and self-doubt that we are experiencing. We need structured, research-informed on-ramps like Wellness Play's youth-led, cooperative-gaming model that builds belonging and measurable well-being while reducing stress and loneliness. As a mission, Wellness Play empowers teens to design and lead evidence-based, intergenerational programs and to publish open playbooks and anonymized data so other schools and cities can replicate results.</p> <p>We as teenagers are all trying to take care of ourselves. Getting enough sleep, staying mentally balanced, and keeping close friendships are just as important to us as chasing the next achievement. It's a constant balancing act between ambition and well-being. We also realize that the uncertainty we feel resonates more broadly outside of our own bubble with our peers around the country and around the world. Teenagers everywhere are imagining their futures, with so many unknowns and obstacles beyond our control, and like us they need to prioritize their health and practice self-care. Wellness Play's goal is to make that balance teachable through free, moderated co-op events, peer-facilitator training, and simple tools families can use at home.</p>
	<p>What barriers do you think holds young people back from reaching their full potential, even when it's well-intentioned or seen as "just the way things are"?</p>	<p>One of the biggest challenges we face as youth today is this uncertainty about the future coupled with the information overload coming from the Internet. In our group, one of these concerns involves the rapidly changing dynamic about technology jobs that is driven by AI. We don't know if we should major in computer science, as we see a high unemployment rate in CS now for recent graduates due to AI replacing their entry-level jobs. Around the country and the world, teens are concerned about whether their hometowns will be habitable and safe as climate change continues to alter our local landscapes. Other teens worry about being displaced, whether by immigration raids or armed conflicts, and fear they will not be able to continue their education. But when teens come together, they can get some perspective on the challenges in their lives and give hope and encouragement to each other. Teenagers in local communities and around the world seek out opportunities to play and thrive, and if we do it together we can support and validate each other. Despite our differences, today's youth seem to agree there's an overwhelming feeling that there are a million different directions our loves could go, some inspiring and some disheartening. A lot of us end up stuck, searching to find our path, but with so many variables at work, it's easy to get lost and never feel sure about where to start. Wellness Play curates clear first steps, co-op sessions with guardrails, so starting is safe and supported.</p> <p>That pressure in fact often makes us never begin. The fear of failure, especially in the environments we come from where achievement is celebrated and mistakes feel like permanent stains, is very high. The same is true we have found in communities where youth are facing overwhelming societal challenges; to surmount the fear of failure involved with trying to emerge and conquer the odds can be paralyzing. From whatever our different backgrounds may be, the choices we need to make seem so high-stakes and critical that so many of us hesitate to take risks. But when we come together and realize we are not the only one to feel this way, then it feels like there's a way to move forward, one step at a time. Wellness Play builds "low-stakes starts", facilitated, cooperative play where the score is connection, not perfection, so youth build confidence through small wins.</p>

Key reflections (Today's Realities)		<p>Youth are navigating achievement pressure + choice paralysis: too many options, too little safety to begin. Low-stakes, research-informed starts—short, moderated, intergenerational co-op sessions—reduce stress and create momentum, and publishing simple measures/playbooks lets any school replicate what works</p>
The Future We Want	<p>Imagine a future where the barriers young people face today have been removed or transformed. What is life like for young people in your community?</p>	<p>In the future, success wouldn't be something that weighs us down. We wouldn't be constantly chasing the next grade, award, or internship, but instead, we would have space to explore what we're curious about without the fear of falling behind. We would have perspective from our peers who are facing more serious real-world challenges, so we could support them in trying to achieve their goals. There would be a perfect balance between our schools and communities, allowing room for creativity, bonding, self-discovery, and academics. Wellness Play's mission is to normalize that balance through school- and library-based programs run by trained youth, with data that shows real gains in stress reduction and belonging.</p> <p>Getting involved would be easier, too. With better transportation or more opportunities close to home, we wouldn't have to depend on a car or someone else's schedule just to participate. Chapters would host open, no-cost programs at schools, libraries, and senior centers, with travel stipends and accessibility supports so every young person can participate.</p> <p>Support systems would be stronger as well. Mental health care would be easy to access, free of stigma, and treated as just another part of being healthy, like studying for a test or practicing a sport. Through Wellness Play, peer facilitators would be trained to run safe, moderated co-op sessions; families would receive simple "play agreements"; and communities would use brief pre/post surveys to track outcomes and publish anonymized data.</p> <p>Most importantly, ideas wouldn't stay stuck as "what-ifs." When we want to try something new, we would be free from the pressure of failure and be trusted enough to take action without getting buried in approvals. Wellness Play's Intergenerational Playbook would make replication easy for any school or city to launch within weeks.</p>
	<p>In this future, how do people of all generations care for and support each other? What is different about how your community makes sure every young person can learn, stay healthy and feel well, no matter the challenges they face?</p>	<p>In the future we imagine, care is not something placed only on young people or their families. It is shared across generations. Older community members step in as mentors, offering wisdom and guidance while still respecting our independence and fresh perspectives. In return, young people bring energy, creativity, and new ideas. Together, this creates a cycle of support that is mutual rather than one-sided. This resonates with learning the wisdom of elders from around the world through the online connections of the Wellness Play community. Wellness Play's "Generations Together" events pair teens and older adults in cooperative games, reducing loneliness on both sides and rebuilding trust through shared play.</p> <p>What makes this future different is the sense of trust and connection. Students don't feel like they are constantly being measured or managed, but they feel encouraged and backed by the adults around them. When parents and grandparents connect with young people by having fun together online or in person, it captures the joy of play from childhood and creates a bond to walk forward together and approach the more serious challenges of pursuing one's education and life's work in society together. Our programs make that trust tangible with clear conduct/time frameworks and youth-adult co-facilitation.</p>

Key reflections (The Future We Want)		A trust-first culture where youth co-own decisions and every site offers no-cost, hybrid access to moderated co-play. Families use simple “play agreements,” and programs track pre/post well-being so communities continuously improve, advancing intergenerational collaboration at the heart of WPAY@30.
Seeds of Change	What ideas, innovations, or changes are already starting now that could bring us closer to the future you just imagined? These could be things you’ve experienced, seen, heard, or dreamed about. They could be led by youth, intergenerational collaborations, communities, governments, or organizations — anything that feels like a step toward that better future.	Even though the future we imagine can feel far away, we’re already starting to see pieces of it come to life. At our schools, more teachers and students are talking openly about mental health, and little by little, the stigma is fading. Youth-led clubs and organizations are growing too, proving that when students are trusted with leadership, they build spaces both uplifting and inclusive. Beyond school, communities are beginning to rethink how to support young people by focusing on the whole person – the basic human needs of food, shelter and security, as well as education, spirituality and mental health. Wellness Play has already led 40+ workshops/tournaments across 11 chapters; partners include libraries and senior centers; micro-surveys show 90%+ of participants report reduced stress; and our UN-NGO stakeholder participations help validate and amplify the work.
	What is one thing we can do today to help those ideas grow and succeed so they truly lead to better futures for everyone? Think about what young people, communities, governments, or the UN could do to support them.	Launch a 100-day Intergenerational Play & Well-Being Sprint: train 100 peer facilitators, host 30 moderated co-op events across chapters, publish an open Playbook + anonymized dataset, and host an online conference with the U.N. to connect with more youth around the world. For young people, Wellness Play’s chapter teams will be starting clubs, leading conversations at school, or joining youth councils. For communities, commit to co-hosting monthly events with Wellness Play and offering in-kind space, transportation stipends, and accessibility supports. For governments and the UN, fund youth-led, play-based well-being pilots with evaluation; include youth co-design in mental-health/education policy; and treat youth engagement as essential, not optional.
Key reflections (Seeds of Change)		Proof points already exist: 40+ workshops across 11 chapters with >90% reporting reduced stress; minutes submitted to the UN Youth Office; partners include libraries and senior centers. Next: a 100-day intergenerational sprint with MOUs and an open Playbook + dataset to scale nationally and abroad.
Main takeaways		Youth can balance anxiety and well-being when trusted with structured, cooperative play that is peer-led, inclusive, and measured. Wellness Play’s model reduces stress, strengthens belonging, and offers an affordable template any school can adopt.
Surprising insights or diverging views		Two realities coexist: some youth are paralyzed by too many choices, while others face too few options and basic-needs barriers. Intergenerational, hybrid programming helps bridge both by adding trust, access, and mentorship.
Follow-up actions		First, schools and communities should create more accessible pathways for student ideas to be implemented within existing and future structures, for example by ensuring that a youth delegate or advisory committee exists to provide input. Second, youth should be encouraged to connect globally outside their own context in order to gain perspective on the challenges that other teens face and find ways to uplift and assist those facing serious challenges to their well-being and security. Third, mental health must be treated as a foundation, with more counselors, normalized conversations, and systems that respond quickly when help is needed. In addition, Wellness Play will publish the Intergenerational Playbook (v1) with a short methods appendix; train 100 peer facilitators; schedule 30 moderated events; post an anonymized outcomes dataset on

	WellnessPlay.org; pursue an independent evaluation; and secure at least two MOUs (library/senior-center + school/district) to sustain the work. Wellness Play will support chapters around the world in connecting with peers and pursuing their own priorities for uplifting their youth communities.
What emerging best practices, initiatives, or innovations have you identified or discussed during this dialogue that you believe are valuable for our upcoming foresight exercise? Please share any insights or examples.	<p>Low-stakes starts (60–90 min, guard-railed co-op sessions) defeat paralysis.</p> <p>Intergenerational co-design/co-play (teens + parents/grandparents/mentors).</p> <p>Youth co-governance (seats with vote) in school/community well-being efforts.</p> <p>Micro-surveys (pre/post) + open playbooks/datasets for replication and accountability.</p> <p>Proximity + hybrid access (libraries/senior centers + Zoom) to widen participation.</p>

NOTE: [Please click here to submit](#) the main results from your #YouthLead Dialogue(s).