Submission from the ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL on Human Rights Council resolution 48/12

The Anglican Consultative Council, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1985 is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission regarding Human Rights Council resolution 48/12 on Human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people.

Responses to the questions set out in the Call for Inputs were requested through the members of the Anglican Communion Youth Network, an authorised network of the Anglican Communion that connects young people from across the global Anglican Communion to learn and work together on issues of mutual concern.

The information provided in this submission is compiled from responses drawn from young Anglicans in Colombia, Mexico and El Salvador. Responses have been translated into English.

1. What are the main challenges that young people face in the country/region where you operate in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and the response to it? If any age-disaggregated data has been collected in this regard, please include it in your response.

Two issues highlighted by young Anglicans are the challenge of adaptation to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges faced in terms of education.

Young people spoke of adaptation as a "fundamental challenge". Young people in churches and communities have found it "difficult not to see each other" and "resort to different methods of communication".

The shift from traditional in-person teaching to online education has also been a challenge. Respondents noted that "there are many young people who due to [a] lack of electronic devices cannot enter their classes". The return to face-to-face teaching during the ongoing pandemic has also been a challenge as many travel by public transport and are therefore "at risk of contagion".

2. What measures are taken in the country/region where you operate to support young people and ensure the full implementation of their rights during and after the pandemic? Please provide examples of policies and programmes adopted to this end, in particular regarding

   • right to work and social security (including, for example, to address the job loss, reduction of working hours, wage cut, etc.);

Some respondents noted the inconsistent implementation of laws and guidance related to employment during the pandemic. Some micro, small and medium-sized businesses "could not continue paying their staff and they were even forced to close temporarily or permanently". Some continued to work "under the risk of contagion and arrests". Larger companies "sent workers home without paying wages, relying on the figures of contract suspension without enjoyment of salary, closure of operations and dismissals." Some individuals found themselves

in the situation of being ineligible for financial support from the government but also not being paid by their employers. This has resulted in a situation where

"many workers in the formal and informal sectors have not been receiving any type of income to cover basic needs for food, medicine, etc., which in turn, from the perspective of care, not only implies a reduction in current family well-being, but also places them in a situation of high vulnerability in the face of eventualities that may arise from both the pandemic and other diseases or events; situations that, due to the lack of disposable income, are usually addressed and resolved, increasing the work time dedicated to care."

One respondent shared that their government had instituted a specific regulation on teleworking, which recognised that teleworking "provides numerous social and employment benefits, promotes decent work, benefits workers with family responsibilities, accesses a broader and more diverse workforce, as well as being a strategy to deal with environmental problems and urban congestion."

Respondents highlighted the "patriarchal social organization of care" as a cause of an "increase in the working time of women" (including young women) who "in addition to fulfilling the household chores and the care that they already regularly did, have had to assume…the function of teachers [and] the increase in hours dedicated to care" often alongside the "demands and obligations of a paid job".

Despite economic reopening as the pandemic has continued, one respondent noted that "the mix of events such as the reduction in family income, the increase in costs (monetary, physical, emotional and time) to prevent contagion or to care for people who they have suffered from the virus, the burden of home schooling, among other things, have made it impossible for the work time dedicated to care to be reduced to at least the level it was before the pandemic." They also noted "these situations have pushed women to try to "reconcile" working life and earning income with care, forcing them to move their businesses or ventures within the home or to telecommute, so that homes have unexpectedly become offices, schools and care centres."

- right to education (including in the context of the closure of educational institutions and transition to online learning);

As noted in the previous answer, the transition to online learning has been a major challenge for young people who responded to the questions. One respondent noted that "there has been special attention [given] to the virtual modality so that this form of education is used in the best possible way." Another respondent, however, noted that when bringing in online learning, their government "did not carry out a study of possibilities that…families have of having access to a computer, tablet, high-end telephone and also internet access in urban and rural areas of the country." Families with difficulties in accessing these technologies therefore "also had difficulties in continuing with educational activities." The financial impact on families having to help children move into online learning was also noted.

- right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (including with the increase in domestic violence and abuse, anxiety and depression, stress caused by social isolation, etc.);

Respondents noted concerns about the rise in violence during the pandemic, as well as the need to treat anxiety, depression and stress caused by the impacts of the pandemic.

- right to participate meaningfully in political and public affairs (including in connection with the prohibition of gatherings and transition to online rallies);

Respondents noted that rights regarding political participation are set out in their national constitutions, and that these laws remained active during the pandemic. No specific instances of the denial of these rights were mentioned in responses.

3. What role have the young people had in COVID-19 response, vaccination and recovery efforts in the country/region where you operate?

Respondents raised the tension between young people being seen as both part of the problem and part of the solution to the pandemic in their countries. They noted that whilst young people have "actively participated" in vaccination and recovery efforts, and have been "very responsible" in coming forward to be vaccinated, they have also been called on to "give an answer and defend" vaccinations when they have done damage. One respondent stated strongly that "the nationwide vaccination process was accelerated with the participation of young people."

4. What measures are taken in the country/region where you operate to value/encourage the role of youth in COVID-19 response, vaccination and recovery efforts?

The main measures taken to encourage the role of youth in COVID-19 response, vaccination and recovery efforts have taken place through government departments and advertising campaigns.

One respondent observed that young people do not have a formal or senior role within the structures of the Church and as such "it is difficult to carry out coordination at that level".