* Challenges faced by young people in your country;

Young people in the UK are certainly facing some challenges which disturb their normal life and daily functioning. As recently voted through our ‘Make your Mark’ consultation – a consultation where around 1 000 000 young people took part, some of the topics which young people find problematic are not surprising at all. They vary from issues around seeking help for their mental health, LGBTI intolerance and the hate crime connected to it. They are struggling with the relevance of their school subjects and the fact that it does not prepare them for, as they call it, life. They are also struggling with the lack of proper transition from school to the work market and are seeking better work-experience hubs. Young people also want to be recognized as active citizens and thus they are struggling with the fact that 16 and 17 year olds are not allowed to vote. Finally, transportation is an issue in the UK which is highly affecting young people as it blocks interactions between rural and urban areas.

* Examples of discrimination against young people in the exercise of their rights;

The clearest example is the discrimination against LGBTI youth. Young people have reportedly expressed that when belonging to the LGBTI community they do not feel safe and have encountered lots of abuse, hate speech and hate crime against them.

Another example is the fact that 16 and 17 year olds were not able to vote and exercise their democratic right, in the Brexit referendum, which was a decision that would mostly affect those of younger age.

* Are you aware of policies and programmes aimed at supporting young people to realise their rights? If so, please describe them;

There are many programmes which are aimed at supporting young people to realise their rights. They usually have coaching and support centres in schools where they can seek help if they are being bullied or discriminated against. Further more, if their conditions impact their mental health, there is a mental health support as part of the NHS which aims at providing exactly and only young people with fast advising and support. Further more they have a Curriculum4Life subject in schools which aims at filling all the knowledge gaps about real adult life that the rest of the subjects fail to.

Some of these services, if not all of them, have been criticised by young people for their implementation and delivery and there is an urge to truly improve them, otherwise they fail to serve its purpose.

* How are youth organisations or youth-led structures involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and/or evaluating policies and programmes on youth in your country?;

The British Youth Council is currently the biggest youth-led body in the UK which ensures meaningful youth participation. We are involved in influencing the development and implementation of policies related to youth through being members of certain youth working groups from the different ministries where we give input based on our experience for the topics in question and in return we get a confirmation/commitment from the government representatives on how this can be done best. The rest of the youth organisations are doing the same. We are also invited for different hearings of different select committees in the parliament to give our input on relevant issues. We also do lots of campaigning and research that we then present at these spaces. Further more, in our case, the house of commons gives the parliamentary chamber to young parliamentarians once per year and live streams it, whereas they discuss topics which are of their importance and different relevant ministers are also in the chamber following and inputting.

* What measures at international level would facilitate/support the realisation of young people’s rights;

The mainstreaming and importance of youth rights on international level might sensitive its importance nationally too, contributing to more attention that politicians would give towards the cause. Also sensitising and supporting reports from youth organisations or on the topic of youth rights during UPRs might help additionally.