

ACWAY

Global Youth Forum

2026

From Intercultural Dialogue to Action

Presented by
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July 2026

ACWAY
A Common Word Among Youth

The
Stirling
Foundation



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1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	4
Objectives	4
3. Planning & Preparation	5
Eligibility & Recruitment	5
Pre-Forum Engagement	5
Participant Sourcing	5
4. ACWAY Team & Partners	6
Additional Partnering Organisations	6
ACWAY Team	6
5. Programme, Forum Methodology, & Format	7
Format	7
Methodology: Advocacy, Dialogue, Action	7
Programme Overview	7
6. Participation & Attendance	9
Survey Response Rates	9
7. Social Media & Online Presence	10
Forum hashtags	10
Brand refresh	10
Social Media and Engagement Metrics	11
8. Highlights, Key Outcomes, & Reflections	18
What Participants Valued Most	18
Measured Outcomes	18
In Participants' Words	18
Projects Emerging from the Forum	19
9. Evaluation, Challenges, & Lessons Learned	20
Key Challenges Raised	20
Areas of Improvement Identified	20
Support Fellows Need to Implement Their Projects	21
Ongoing Engagement Intentions	21
10. Conclusion	22
11. Contact	23

1. Executive Summary

From 8–10 June 2026, A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY) delivered its ninth Global Youth Forum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in partnership with the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Held under the theme ‘From Dialogue to Action,’ the Forum brought together 61 young leaders from 19 countries representing 8 faith and non-faith backgrounds, alongside local Uzbek participants, for three days of advocacy, dialogue, and project design built around ACWAY's Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs).

The Forum was assessed through matched pre- and post-Forum surveys (26 matched respondents from the international cohort). Results point to a clear and measurable impact:

- Overall satisfaction: participants rated the Forum 4.7/5, exceeding expectations.
- Knowledge of other faith and cultural traditions rated Good/Advanced rose from 57% to 92%.
- Confidence to implement a community activity rose from 65% to 100% of respondents.
- 96.6% of participants intend to implement an ACWAY project, and 93% felt part of the ACWAY community after the Forum.
- Participants proposed 25+ concrete community projects spanning interfaith dialogue, education, storytelling, digital advocacy, mental health, and women's protection.

Feedback also identified clear areas for improvement, most notably requests to extend the Forum's duration, build in more rest and networking time, and strengthen post-Forum mentorship and support. These findings, together with a full account of planning, delivery, and outcomes, are set out in the sections that follow.



2. Introduction

ACWAY is an international youth network that brings together young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to build understanding across faiths and cultures, and to promote peace and coexistence through local community projects. Over the past decade, ACWAY has engaged over 1,000 young people through eight international training forums worldwide.

In 2026, the ninth ACWAY Global Youth Forum was hosted in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in partnership with the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan was selected as host in part because 60% of its population is under the age of 30, and because of its historical role as a centre of Islamic scholarship and intercultural exchange for over a thousand years.

Objectives

- Building skilled, action-ready youth leaders: equipping participants with targeted training in advocacy, dialogue, and project design.
- Strengthening a global network with a unified vision: convening 80+ youth leaders (including 50+ from multiple countries) to collaborate and co-create a unified interfaith statement.
- Turning ideas into lasting impact: using ACWAY's Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs) and cross-sector partnerships to help participants design and launch scalable community initiatives.

This report synthesises the Forum's planning, delivery, and outcomes, drawing on pre- and post-Forum survey data, the Forum concept note, and the project mentoring tracker, to provide an accurate account of what was delivered and the impact achieved.

Watch the following recaps: [Day 1 recap](#), [Day 2 recap](#), and [Day 3 recap](#), of the ACWAY Global Youth Forum.



3. Planning & Preparation

Eligibility & Recruitment

Participants were recruited against a defined eligibility framework: active involvement in interfaith/intercultural peacebuilding or a relevant project/organisation (or active engagement on campus or in local youth work), first-time participation in an ACWAY forum (excluding returning fellows), a good level of English, and being aged 18–30 by 7 June 2026. Selected participants committed to attending the online pre-Forum session, delivering at least one interfaith/intercultural project between June and December 2026, and remaining engaged in post-Forum activities through 2026–2027.

Pre-Forum Engagement

The webinar consisted of a Welcome & Orientation session, which introduced ACWAY and the incoming cohort, followed by a Foundations & Framework session that introduced the principles of interfaith dialogue and ACWAY's Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs).

Participant Sourcing

The cohort was built across five recruitment categories tracked through the Forum's project mentoring system: Returning Fellows, Partner Nominees, Team Nominees, the General Pool (open application), and Active Local (Uzbek) participants which ensured a mix of institutional continuity, partner-network reach, and open access.



4. ACWAY Team & Partners

This forum was organised by ACWAY, in partnership with the [Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#), supported by our longstanding partner, [The Stirling Foundation](#), and in collaboration with the [Dialogue Center Singapore](#).

Additional Partnering Organisations

- [United Religions Initiative](#)
- [The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers](#)

ACWAY Team

The Forum's design, facilitation, and mentoring were delivered by the ACWAY's Organising Committee and coordination team, supported by ACWAY Mentors drawn from the returning fellows' network. We gratefully acknowledge the facilitators, mentors, and partner organisations whose contributions made the Forum's outcomes possible.

ACWAY's Organising Committee for the ninth forum are listed below:

Name	Country	Fellow Year	Role(s)
Azizah Mutik-Lefebvre	Indonesia-France	2015	Recruitment & Participant Coordinator
Hira Aftab	UK-Pakistan	2021	Marketing and Communications Lead
Izzy Ben-Ebrahim	South Africa	2015	Forum Manager
Jyuri Michino	Japan-USA	2015	Engagement Lead
Liliya Khasanova	Russia-USA	2015	Executive Director of ACWAY
Riley Anderson-Barton	USA	2021	Programme Lead
Rodge Lelis Jr.	Philippines-Iraq	2017	Participant Experience Coordinator
Sibu Szymanowska	Costa Rica-USA	2019	Logistics and Social Media Officer
Vladislav Artiukhov	Russia-Germany	2023	Programme and Logistics Lead
Zainab Charmoun	Lebanon	2021	Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator



5. Programme, Forum Methodology, & Format

Format

The Forum ran in-person over three core days (8–10 June 2026), with participants arriving on 7th June and departing on 11th June, hosted at the New Uzbekistan University in Tashkent.

Methodology: Advocacy, Dialogue, Action

The programme was structured around three pillars:

1. **Advocacy:** building a shared foundation for inclusion, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence across cultures and faiths.
2. **Dialogue:** participants sharing experiences, lessons, and insights from their communities.
3. **Action:** turning conversation into concrete, practical community projects.

Together these pillars formed a participatory, practice-oriented methodology designed for both immediate learning and longer-term impact.

Programme Overview

Day	Focus	Key Sessions
Day 0 (7 June)	Arrival	Arrival & preparation; Informal welcome.
Day 1 (8 June)	Advocacy + Dialogue	Opening ceremony; Cohort re-introductions; Community agreements; “Crossing the line” energiser; IDGs as our North star; Continuum – Where Do You Stand?; Practice (theatre) arena – Advocacy through dialogue.
Day 2 (9 June)	Dialogue & Design	Practitioner panel; Facilitated dialogue deep dive; Design lab – Building for impact; World café – Ideas in motion; Synthesis circle; Skill building breakout rooms.
Day 3 (10 June)	Action – Leaving Ready to Lead	Project finalisation; Fellow project showcase; Excursion/site visit; Synthesis & sense-making; Commitments & continuity; Mentor tributes; Closing ceremony; Cultural & faith exchange night.
Day 4 (11 June)	Departure	Participant departure.

Session-level feedback confirmed the strength of the interactive, practice-based design: overall engagement with sessions and activities was rated 4.5/5 (‘Very engaging’). The most highly rated sessions were Design Lab 3 (Strengthening & pitching ideas / World café), the Energisers, and ‘Standing on the line: Interfaith perspectives in motion’ paired with the sightseeing excursion.

The following link leads to the Resource Hub, [ACWAY Forum | UZB-2026 | Resource Hub \[WIP\]](#), a living document used to share all key details with Fellows before and during the Forum.



6. Participation & Attendance

The Forum was designed to bring together 80+ youth leaders, including 61 from multiple countries, alongside 30–40 local Uzbek youth leaders. Participants were tracked across five categories in the Forum's project mentoring system:

Category	Participants Tracked
Returning Fellows	5
Partner Nominees	6
Team Nominees	5
General Pool	18
Active Local (Uzbek) Participants	15

The international and local cohort together represented more than 20 countries of residence or origin which included South Africa, United States, United Kingdom, Singapore, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Japan, Lebanon, China, Indonesia, Myanmar, North Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland, Algeria, Sri Lanka, India, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ireland/Spain/Ghana, and Uzbekistan, and a eight faith and non-faith backgrounds, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Scientology, and Atheism.

Survey Response Rates

- 31 pre-Forum survey responses.
- 29 post-Forum survey responses (26 of 33 from the international cohort).
- 26 matched participants were used for all pre/post comparisons reported in this document.



7. Social Media & Online Presence

A comprehensive digital strategy was used to amplify the Forum's reach and ensure youth voices reached audiences far beyond Tashkent. Before, during, and after the Forum, social media and digital platforms were used to build awareness, engage Fellows, and communicate outcomes.

- **Before the Forum:** Content introduced the Forum, highlighted the selected Fellows, and built awareness around its themes and expected outcomes. This assisted in creating a sense of anticipation and facilitating connections between Fellows before the Forum began.
- **During the Forum:** Throughout the Forum posts and stories shared information about key sessions, quotes, and behind-the-scenes moments. This allowed external stakeholders to gain an insight into the discussions happening in real time.
- **After the Forum:** Content focused on highlights, celebrating partner contributions and Fellow engagement. Further information about the impact of the Forum and ways to continue engagement will be shared in July and August.

Moments of cultural and faith exchange, snippets of the energiser sessions and the sharing of ideas during activity brainstorming sessions resulted in organic engagement, with many Fellows continuing to share reflections and photos after the Forum concluded, demonstrating that connections outlasted the formal programme. Many Fellows acted as digital ambassadors and used their own social media presence to amplify the Forum and its messaging. One of the Forum participants shared, *"I feel excited about finding a community who share a desire to create positive change."*

Forum hashtags

During the Forum, the following hashtags were used:

#ACWAYForum2026, #FromDialogueToAction, #UnityInDiversity, #YouthForPeace, and #ACWAYYouth.

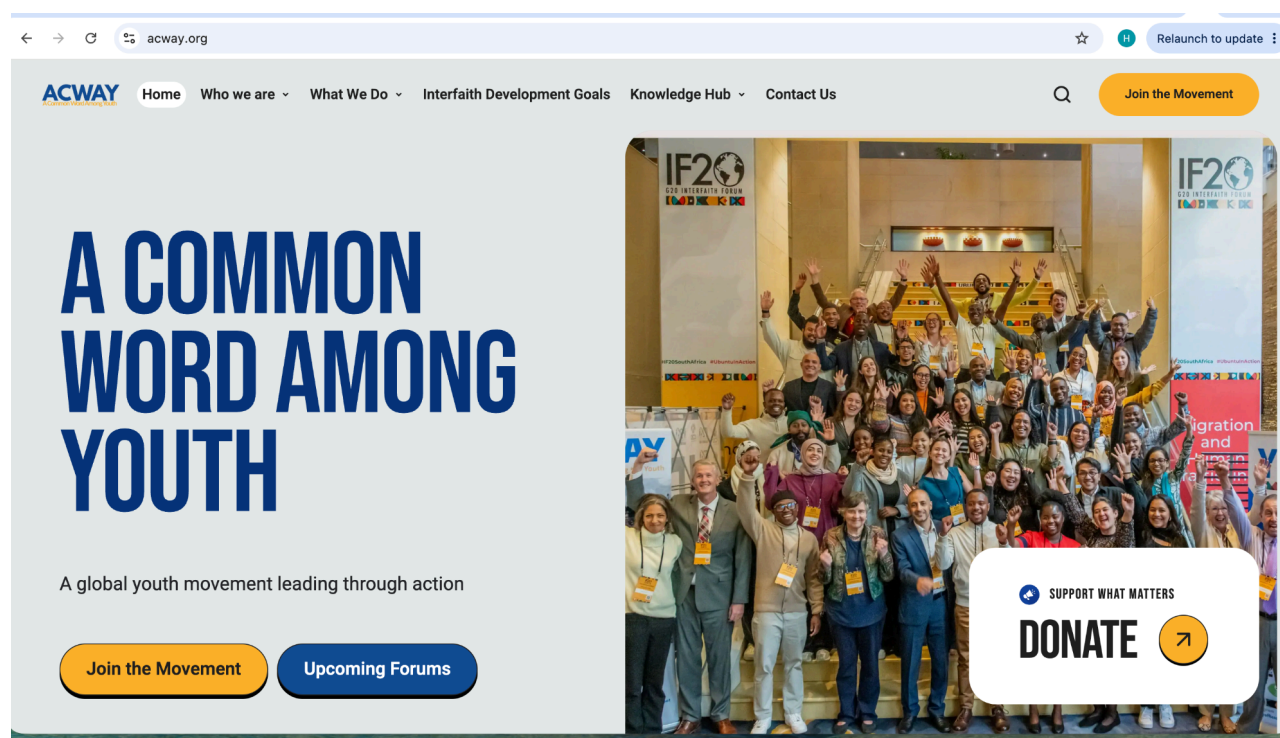
Brand refresh

In celebration of ACWAY's tenth anniversary and the successful delivery of the previous Forum in Cape Town, the logo and website underwent a brand refresh ahead of the Forum in Tashkent. This includes:

- **Logo:** Updating the font to a modern style, making the colour of the logo more vibrant and making a slight variation to the name from 'A Common Word Among the Youth' to 'A Common Word Among Youth'. This logo was officially adopted and used at the Forum in Tashkent.



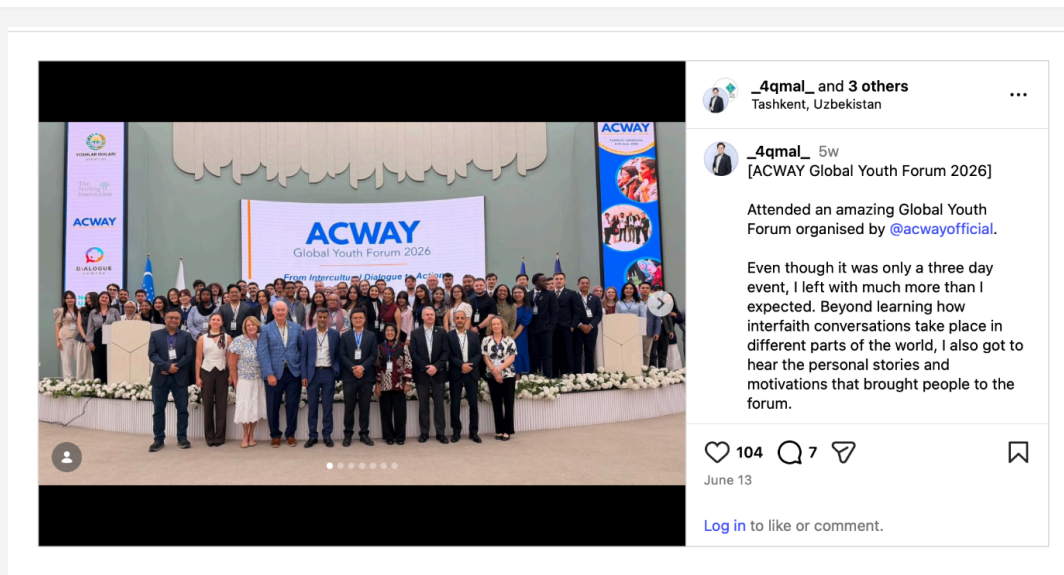
- **Website:** Prior to announcing the Forum, a new purpose built website was launched. It brings together ten years of knowledge, which includes highlighting Fellow activities, refreshing the Fellows map, and creating pages to display reports.



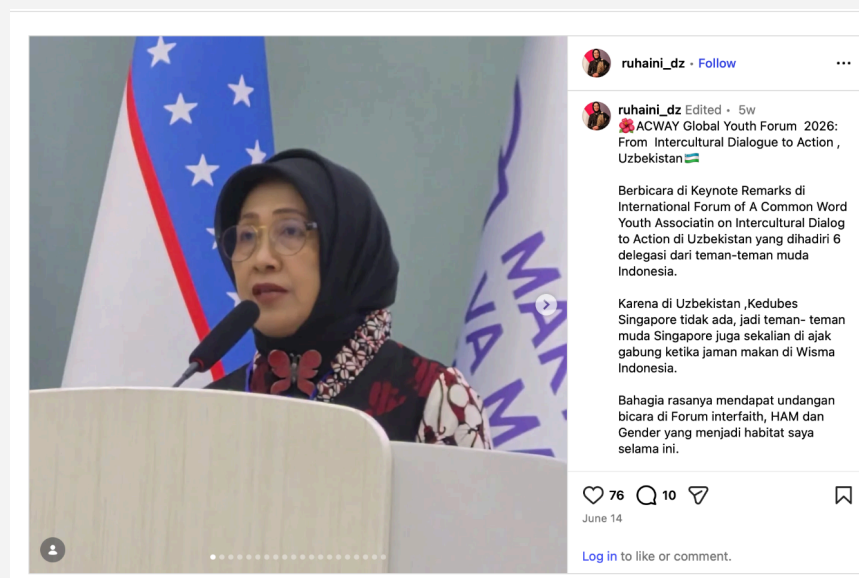
Social Media and Engagement Metrics

Between 4th April and 21st June, ACWAY's social media presence experienced a modest growth across Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, and TikTok.

On **Instagram**, ACWAY's followers grew to 1,269, with 174 new followers gained during the period. A total of 25 posts were published, resulting in 17,946 accounts being reached and 96,517 views on ACWAY's Instagram profile. This growth shows an ongoing trend from the previous Forum in Cape Town and demonstrates the importance of improved visibility and sharing relevant content to improve engagement and brand building.



[Fellow's \(2026\) Instagram Post](#)



[Prof. Dr. Haji Siti Ruhani Dzuhayatin - Indonesia Ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan and Republic of Kyrgyzstan](#)

LinkedIn also demonstrated growth, rising to 795 followers with 178 new followers. 15 posts comprising content shared by ACWAY, Fellows, and partners, saw 3,223 impressions. This represented an 807.9% increase in

engagement in comparison to the previous three months. This illustrates LinkedIn's pivotal role when raising awareness about youth led change.



Judith Macapella • 1st

Educational Psychologist | ACWAY Fellow | Interfaith Advocate
1mo • Edited •

I am honoured to have shared the stage for the second time as co-MC with the amazing **Sandile Hlayisi** for the Global Youth Forum held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This forum was organised by **A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY)** in partnership with the **Youth Affairs Agency - Yoshlar ishlari agentligi** and the Dialogue Centre Singapore. Just like last year, the cohort was brimming with passion for community work, excitement, and unimaginable capacity to learn about and embrace one another as an interfaith/intercultural group. Maybe I don't say it enough but I absolutely love being an ACWAY Fellow!

[#ACWAYForum2026](#) [#FromDialogueToAction](#)



A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY)

795 followers

1mo •

Announcing the official start of the ACWAY Global Youth Forum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan! ...more



[Returning Fellow's \(2025\) LinkedIn Post](#)



Zulfiyya Rzayeva • 1st

MSc Candidate @ Lund University | SI Scholar | Development Practitioner | Y...
5d •

As a development practitioner, I've always appreciated the perspectives that question whether the SDGs alone can achieve lasting social change, or if it requires looking beyond a single development framework.

Attending the ACWAY Global Youth Forum 2026 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan became another opportunity to rethink that assumption, this time through the lens of the Interfaith Development Goals (IDGs).

What stayed with me most was the realization that interfaith engagement is just as essential to sustainable peace as policy dialogue, especially in regions where shared histories are often overshadowed by perceived differences. As the only fellow from Azerbaijan, it was a privilege to share my country's long tradition of intercultural coexistence while keenly observing the cultural parallels that connect Azerbaijan with Central Asia.

Big thanks to **A Common Word Among Youth (ACWAY)** for organizing such a thoughtful forum and to everyone who made these conversations so meaningful.



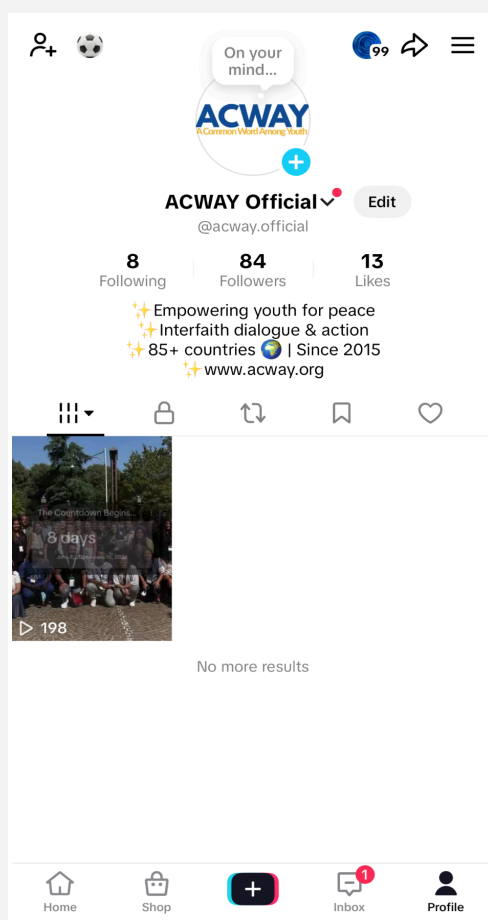
[Fellow's \(2026\) LinkedIn post](#)

Facebook maintained its position as ACWAY's largest platform, reaching 8,900 followers. A total of 25 posts were shared during this period and the page received 20,750 views, a 2052% increase, and an engagement of 1,406, a 35,050% increase. The page also gained 84 new followers. The majority of views came from 25-44 year olds, in India, Pakistan, Egypt, United States, Indonesia, and the United Kingdom.



[Forum Facebook post](#)

In addition, an official [ACWAY TikTok page](#) was created before the Forum in Tashkent. Despite only one video being shared on this platform during the Forum, the page gained 84 followers and received multiple messages from young people asking how they can join ACWAY's community.



These metrics reflect ACWAY’s growing recognition, with each platform creating pathways to reach new audiences, engage existing and new Fellows, and increase brand awareness. ACWAY’s growing follower count on Instagram and TikTok highlights the importance of using creative forms of content to disseminate information about the Forum, its content, and impact. Facebook remains ACWAY’s largest platform and continues to show a notable growth in engagement when content regarding ACWAY forums is shown. Finally, LinkedIn continues to promote ACWAY’s professional credibility and carries the voices of Fellows beyond Tashkent.

Website

The **website** refresh coincided with the launch of the Forum in Uzbekistan. During the time period commencing 1st April and ending 17th July, ACWAY’s website registered 2,500 new users and 14,000 event counts (actions such as clicking links, filling out forms, and page views). The metrics for this time period for the website are shown below:



8. Highlights, Key Outcomes, & Reflections

What Participants Valued Most

- Building meaningful relationships and networking.
- A safe, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere.
- Interactive learning and engaging sessions.
- Energisers and joyful moments, including the closing collective dance.
- Cultural exchange and discovering Uzbekistan.
- Personal growth and confidence.

Measured Outcomes

Indicator (rated Good/Advanced or equivalent)	Pre-Forum	Post-Forum
Knowledge of other faith and cultural traditions	57%	92%
Experience in interfaith and intercultural work	65%	92%
Ability to engage in difficult conversations on faith/culture	50%	77%
Understanding the place of religion, culture, and faith for youth	77%	92%
Confidence to implement a community activity	65%	100%

- **Forum met expectations:** 4.7/5 (Exceeded expectations)
- **Session engagement:** 4.5/5 (Very engaging)
- **Readiness to take action now:** 4.5/5 (Very ready)
- **Support received from ACWAY:** 4.7/5 (Felt very supported)
- **Feel part of the ACWAY community:** 93% Yes, 7% Somewhat
- **Felt the Forum created a safe, open space for dialogue:** 93% Yes, 7% Somewhat
- **Formed meaningful connections with other participants:** 93% Yes, 7% Somewhat
- **Intend to implement an ACWAY project:** 96.6% Yes, 3.5% Maybe

In Participants' Words

“ACWAY gave me a global family. The conversations stayed with me, the friendships feel permanent, and I’m leaving with a real sense of hope for what young people can build together when given the space to connect.” — Rishini



“Since returning home, I have continued thinking about the people I met and the conversations we had. The Forum broadened my perspective, strengthened my motivation, and gave me a greater sense of responsibility.” — Kanata



“This forum helped me look within and understand myself better... it gave me hope and showed me that the world isn't doomed and that young people like me can actually make a difference.” — Azizakhon



Projects Emerging from the Forum

Participants left the Forum with concrete project concepts across seven thematic areas:

- 10+ projects on interfaith dialogue and social cohesion (e.g., interfaith dialogue circles and scriptural reasoning dinners, storytelling programmes to reduce prejudice, interfaith trivia nights and cultural exchange workshops).
- 5 education and youth empowerment initiatives (e.g., religious literacy training for teachers, intercultural student clubs, mentorship and scholarship pipelines).
- 4 storytelling, arts, and cultural projects (e.g., photo exhibitions documenting community experience, theatre-inspired dialogue activities).
- 3 digital advocacy and civic engagement initiatives (e.g., campaigns encouraging youth participation in elections).
- 2 mental health initiatives, including support for displaced communities.
- 1 project addressing violence against women, combining digital advocacy with community workshops.
- 1 community development initiative, including local ownership projects such as village clean-ups and school partnerships.



9. Evaluation, Challenges, & Lessons Learned

A significant proportion of respondents explicitly reported no challenges, describing the Forum as well organised, reflecting a high overall level of satisfaction. Where challenges were raised, they centred on the following themes:

Key Challenges Raised

- **Programme pace and schedule:** the programme felt intensive, with long days and limited time for rest, reflection, or informal networking.
- **Time for project development:** participants wanted more time for Design Labs, group work, and deeper project refinement.
- **Session balance:** some participants suggested reducing lecture-style sessions in favour of more interactive, participant-led formats.
- **Logistics and time management:** requests for clearer scheduling and smoother transitions between sessions.
- **Language and communication:** occasional language barriers affected discussions for some participants.
- **Networking structure:** while networking was widely praised, some wanted more structured opportunities to connect across regions.

Areas of Improvement Identified

- Extend the Forum from 3 to 4–5 days (the most frequent recommendation) to reduce intensity and make fuller use of participants' international travel.
- Build in more breaks and reduce schedule intensity, including quick energisers between long sessions.
- Increase structured and informal networking opportunities, especially early in the Forum, and intentionally mix participants by country.
- Provide more time for project development, including expanded Design Labs and practical support on fundraising and implementation.
- Deepen dialogue and discussion, with more opportunities to practise (not just learn about) dialogue, and more space for participants to present their own projects.
- Strengthen post-Forum engagement through continued mentorship, organiser availability, and stronger follow-up mechanisms.
- Improve food and catering, with greater attention to dietary requirements and equal arrangements for local participants.
- Strengthen specific sessions, including the opening panel and Forum Theatre session, and make more use of quiet morning sessions (e.g., guided meditation).
- Create dedicated opportunities for returning Fellows to connect with the organising team.

Support Fellows Need to Implement Their Projects

Post-Forum feedback identified the following priority support needs, in order of frequency:

- Mentorship and technical guidance (most requested).
- Communication and visibility support.
- Financial support.
- Networking and partnerships.
- Institutional support and legitimacy.
- Resources and learning materials.
- Context-specific support.

Ongoing Engagement Intentions

Engagement Activity	Participants Interested (of 29)
Staying connected with fellows	28
Participating in future online or offline events	26
Implementing a project	25
Mentorship opportunities	22
Volunteering with the Executive Committee	20
Sharing opportunities (grants, fellowships, etc.)	20
Starting a regional ACWAY group	16
Facilitating an ACWAY Forum in their country	15

Taken together, this feedback confirms that the Forum's core offering: advocacy, dialogue, and action, is working, and that the priority for the next Forum is to extend the time available for rest, project development, and structured networking, while sustaining the highly interactive, inclusive atmosphere participants consistently praised.



10. Conclusion

The 2026 ACWAY Global Youth Forum in Tashkent delivered clear, measurable impact against its stated objectives. Participants left with stronger knowledge of other faiths and cultures, greater confidence engaging in difficult conversations, and most strikingly universal (100%) confidence to implement a community activity, up from 65% before the Forum. Nearly all participants (96.6%) intend to carry that learning forward into a concrete ACWAY project, and 93% left feeling part of the ACWAY community.

The Forum's advocacy–dialogue–action methodology, delivered through interactive Design Labs, dialogue circles, and practice-based sessions, was consistently identified by participants as the source of this impact. The challenges and recommendations raised, mainly around Forum length, pacing, and post-Forum support, are constructive refinements to an already high-performing model rather than signs of a shortfall, and provide a clear, actionable agenda for the next edition.

With over 25 new community projects (projected to be?) launched across seven thematic areas and a cohort expressing strong intent to stay engaged with ACWAY's network, the 2026 Forum has strengthened both the immediate skills of its participants and the long-term reach of ACWAY's global mission.



11. Contact

For questions about this report, the 2026 Forum, or ACWAY's ongoing programmes, please contact the ACWAY programme team.

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