THEME

“Engaging young people as actors of social transformations for conflict prevention and sustainable development”

Concept note
INTRODUCTION

In last decades, Africa has experienced the greatest demographic growth, with a trend that is expected to reach 2.5 billion people by 2050, and 4.3 billion by 2100. This major population growth makes Africa the youngest continent. Already, in 2020, out of a population of 1.3 billion people, youth constituted 60%.

As a youthful continent, Africa is, however, the one that still has the highest rate of extreme poverty. Despite a significant decrease in the proportion of people living on less than $1.90 per day, between 1985 (47%) and 2017 (39%), extreme poverty is becoming an African singularity. The continent, which was home to a quarter of the world’s extremely poor in 1990, now concentrates more than 60% (469 out of 751 million people), and this rate is expected to reach 90% by 2030.¹

This extreme poverty is often linked to situations of fragility: African countries with the highest poverty rates are also the most fragile. The multiple factors of fragility include conflict and insecurity.

Since the end of the Cold War, the number of armed conflicts in Africa involving one state among the belligerents has diminished considerably. However, since the late 2000s, the nature of violence has changed and become more complex, on the one hand, mainly due to the rise of many rebels and extremist groups, for example, AQMIL in the Sahel, or Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin and Central Africa, and on the other hand due to the increase in political violence (riots, violence against the civilian population, etc.), especially in urban areas, following the rise in political claims, especially during the electoral cycles.

In view of the development of the continent, the consolidation of peace, which presupposes multiple responses on the security, political, but also socio-economic levels, remains a crucial issue to guarantee the social transformations for the well-being of the populations.

Faced with this challenge, the continent’s youth is an asset. The potential of youth to contribute to peacebuilding and development is evident considering its demographic weight, but also because young people are increasingly educated, informed and politically aware. Young Africans are already and can better become, in their communities, countries and regions, actors and contributors to the culture of peace, understood in its broad sense as the transformation of conflict and violence, the improvement of political governance, socio-economic and ecological.

It is this commitment to peace and youth development that UNESCO supports in the framework of its Operational Strategy for Youth (2014-2021).

The same desire on the part of the AU, expressed through the African Youth Charter, the AU Roadmap on Taking Full Advantage of the Demographic Dividend by Investing in Youth², and Agenda 2063 for the Africa We Want, notably its Aspiration 4 calling for “a peaceful and secure Africa”, and more precisely

² Adoptée en 2016, en prévision de la proclamation de 2017, Année de la jeunesse, cette feuille de route a identifié quatre piliers thématiques, à savoir : (i) Emploi et entrepreneuriat ; (ii) Education et développement des compétences ; (iii) Santé et bien-être ; (iv) Droits, gouvernance et autonomisation de la jeunesse.

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Aspiration 6 for “an Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.”

It is also for the two Organizations, and their Member States, to contribute to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security, of the United Nations Youth Strategy known as “Youth 2030”, and the 2030 Agenda.

SUB-THEMES AND REVIEW OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES

The theme “Youth Engagement as Actors of Social Transformations for Peace and Development” is divided into four sub-themes that bring together and present each of the activities, events or programmes implemented, worldwide, within the second edition of the Luanda Biennale. The second edition of the Biennale of Luanda shall be opened with a high-profile exchange between African Ministers of Youth, 150 selected youth as well as stakeholders of various domains. This event shall be the initial step towards the creation of a platform gathering all African Ministers of Youth, which goal shall be to create an accountability framework in the implementation of policies and initiatives to ensure that they coherently respond to youth demands, aspirations, expectations, needs and contributions around the continent.

Sub-theme 1: Promoting and Encouraging Youth Civic Engagement: Education for Peace, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development

Peace consists first and foremost in shaping minds by inspiring values, attitudes and behaviors. This is the meaning of the UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974) and SDG 4, in its target 4.7 (By 2030, ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development). It is about building the capacity of girls and boys to create more just, tolerant and peaceful societies (SDG 16). Working towards building just, tolerant and peaceful societies also means fighting against hate speech, especially on social networks. This is the objective of media and information literacy. The aim is to strengthen the critical spirit of youth in particular, and of the population in general, with regard to information, media and Information and Communication Technologies, “by giving them the means to participate in civic and social life, to protect themselves online, to express themselves, to access economic development and to fight against disinformation.” Encouraging youth civic engagement also means promoting education for sustainable development “this means to make informed decisions and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations, and this with respect for cultural diversity.”

Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

- **Leadership Training In Peace and Security - LTIPS (Youth and Women Edition)**

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Countries: Continental
The LTIPS program is part of the societal project *The Societies We Want* and aims to train and mobilize youth and women leaders who are agents of change for peace, citizenship, and resilience by building a network of youth and women ambassadors of peace in the communities who are provided with the knowledge and leadership tools, through interaction with inspirational leaders and expert trainers. The LTIPS features a series of 10 courses that helps to share knowledge and experiences on ICESCO’S approach on Peacebuilding and Peace for Development. The LTIPS gives an overview of peace situation in the world along with the various institutions and mechanisms in charge of peace 2- puts forward a holistic approach by delving on all factors contributing to building or breaking peace 3- provides the peacebuilders toolbox through skills-oriented modules.

Partners: CONFEJES, CONFEMEN, G5 Sahel and UNESCO Maghreb

- *Youth, peace weavers in the cross-border regions of Gabon, Cameroon and Chad*

Countries: Cameroon, Gabon, Chad

Funded by the United Nations Secretary-General’s Peace Building Fund (PBFO) for a period of 24 months, this project aims to create a network of 1,800 young Peace Weavers, to make them actors in the consolidation of peace in the cross-border regions of the three countries and the prevention of instability linked, in particular, to illicit trafficking, on the one hand; and the training of 160 young leaders of social enterprise projects, on the other hand.

Partners: Governments of interested countries, United Nations Organization Against Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) and the Pan-African Youth Network for the Culture of Peace (PAYNCOP).

- *Youth, Conflict and Security in Eastern African Region*

Country: Sub-regional (Eastern Africa)

In Eastern Africa, the youth perspectives are being distorted by stereotypes that associate young people with violence. Millions of the world’s young people live in contexts affected by armed conflict, a situation that calls for the young people to engage their fellow youth not only as beneficiaries, but as equal partners in all our efforts, especially in the efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. Many young people face challenges to the attainment of their aspirations, with poverty depriving them of the right to dignity, making them vulnerable to violence. 2019 UNESCO Leveraging on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST) School on the theme of Youth, Peace and Security, this intervention aims to promote mechanisms that ensure peace and security among the youth, increase youth employability, youth empowerment in constructive political engagements that eliminate feelings of powerlessness and marginalization.

Partners: MOST Committee Uganda, Institute for Peace and Security studies, IGAD
• **Sub-theme 2: Youth employability, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, including cultural/creative industries and green/blue economies**

Employability and entrepreneurship for youth empowerment regard first and foremost education and training. Through education and training young people first acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviors that would equip them “to find and keep a job, to progress at work and to adapt to change throughout one’s working life.” It is also through education and training that the “entrepreneurial spirit” of young people can flourish and be strengthened.

Employability and entrepreneurship is targeted at UNESCO within the framework of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), specifically as part of the implementation of the Organization Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2016-2021). Through this strategy, UNESCO intends to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by supporting its Member States in their efforts to highlight the relevance of their TVET systems and by equipping all young people and adults with the skills needed to access decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning opportunities. The TVET strategy covers three priority areas: (1) fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship; (2) promoting gender equity and equality; (3) facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

Through the skills acquired through TVET, young people can develop the mindset and know-how to consider self-employment and escape from the poverty trap while contributing to the economic and social development of their community.

Self-employment, as a solution to youth unemployment, can also be created in the field of creative and cultural industries (crafts, art, music, festival, film, etc.), and TVET can also contribute to this.

Entrepreneurship as a source of employment for young people favors stability, security and peace; and cultural, creative and green entrepreneurship, in particular, remains a not very exploited niche in Africa for the economic empowerment of youth.

Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

- **Analysis of National Youth Socio-economic Transformation Agenda in Africa CA**

**Country:** Continental, targeting 20 countries (Liberia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Zambia. The Gambia, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea (Conakry), Madagascar, Sao Tome, Ethiopia, Mali and Rwanda.)

This initiative builds on the assumption that a strong and accountable leadership and successful integration needs to be anchored on participation; the investment in youth; and mainstream the great potential of the population of which the Youth are an essential pillar. Through the analysis of national youth policies and strategies, the objective is to support governments, international organizations, UN agencies, Civil society organizations, private sector and donors to: i) identify and assess the national youth policies and relevant strategies in countries, for their effective operationalization and implementation, notably in line with the African Youth Charter; ii) establish a benchmark of standards, including indicative criterions and accountability framework in the design, implementing and monitoring of youth development policies, programmes and activities; and iii) promote and advocate best practices, knowledge management and sharing.

**Partner:** YouthConneckt Africa Hub

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- **Strengthening the skills and capacities of young cultural professionals and enhancing opportunities through knowledge transfer and exchanges (Regional Project Transcultura: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union through Culture and Creativity).**

**Countries:** Antigua y Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belice, Cuba, Dominica, República Dominicana, Granada, Guyana, Haití, Jamaica, Monserrat, San Kitts y Nevis, Santa Lucía, San Vicente y las Granadinas, Suriname, Trinidad y Tobago and the European Union

This Programme funded by European Union in partnership with UNESCO seeks to deepen integration between Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union. It aims to harness diversity and build bridges between people and cultures from different linguistic areas, with focus in youth. The Programme is relevant because it fosters culture to strengthen dynamism in the regional integration process across linguistic barriers and encourages greater participation of young professionals, from diverse cultural backgrounds, in labour markets, through capacity building. This will be achieved through the establishment of a regional Cultural Training Hub in Cuba, linked to relevant Caribbean institutions and supported by scholarships to facilitate mobility. The Programme will create opportunities for entrepreneurship, socio-economic projects and collaboration in the cultural and creative sectors, heritage and tourism within the Caribbean region and with the EU.

**Partners:** European Union EU, Office of the Historian of the City of Havana, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Cuba, Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Cuba and other key countries, University of Havana, University of the West Indies.

- **Project to Support Youth Artificial Intelligence Initiatives for the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Central Africa (P-IA-DD-AC)**

**Country:** Angola, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe, Cameroon

It is a sub-regional initiative of Central Africa, in partnership with the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) and the Youth Organization LoYoC (Local Youth Corner) of Cameroon. It builds on the efforts of existing youth and AI platforms in Africa to create a unique platform for young AI practitioners in sub-Central Africa region to share best practices in this area and propose innovative AI-based initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa by 2030. The project is based on a multi-level approach in terms of geographical scope and actions, encompassing capacity building on AI and ethics, promotion of youth-led initiatives, financial support to the most valuable AI-based solutions and network building. The project shall, on the medium term, multiply and reinforce employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of AI.

**Partners:** National Youth Council; PAYNCOP (Pan-African Youth Network for a Culture of Peace), Local Youth Corner (LoYoC); AfricAvenir-G54, Youth Dynamics (DMJ), Mayors, Prefects, Religious and Traditional Leaders, Women’s Organizations.

- **The Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP)**

**Country:** STEP has successfully been carried out in various countries Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Lesotho, Madagascar and Kenya
Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) seeks to address the entrepreneurial skillset gap through action-oriented entrepreneurship training and increase job creation and productivity among the youth. This initiative contextualizes entrepreneurship training for specific countries where it is implemented, by leveraging the success outcomes of Student training for entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP4Youth) programmes conducted in other countries for TVET students. STEP aims at encouraging the trainees to start a micro business that generates revenue and profits during the 12 weeks of the training. Initially, a capital of 100 USD is given to each group of trainees as a startup capital, which is later returned at the end of the training, but the trainees are allowed to keep their profits. The trainees are also encouraged to make errors and negative feedback and experiences are not frowned upon, rather seen as challenges that need to be overcome. This paradigm ensures that the trainees do not shun challenges, rather, they develop resilience, proactiveness and self-initiative to take action and make profitable micro businesses.

**Partners:** German National Commission for UNESCO, Leuphana of Luneburg University in Germany, Kenyatta University in Kenya

- **Sub-topic 3: Introduction to Youth Foresight and Social Innovation for Sustainable Development and Social Cohesion**

UNESCO has designed and developed a method of collective intelligence and action-oriented research called Future Literacy Lab. Future literacy is a skill that allows better understand the role of the future in our perception of the present. We become “literate” of the future only when acknowledging that the future does not yet exist and that it can only be imagined. Considering that human beings have the faculty to imagine, it follows that all can imagine the future in a plurality of ways and thus become literate of the future.

The introduction to the foresight and innovation of young people for social cohesion is part of the promotion of this competence, through the project “Imagining the Futures of Africa” (IAF), led by UNESCO and the Fondation Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP). This project aims to carry out pilot experiments in Africa, testing prototypes of the Future Literacy Lab (FLL), as a tool for choosing public policies, while strengthening the foresight capacities of the African population, in particular young people, in order to contribute to positive social transformations on the continent and to prepare the future more effectively.

Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

- **UNESCO-OCP Foundation project: “Imagining the Futures of Africa” (IAF)**

**Country: Africa – Morocco**

This project aims to reinforce the foresight capacities of the african populations, especially youth, to contribute to positive social transformations in Africa & a more effective preparation to the future.

Within the IAF's framework (UNESCO/OCP Foundation/UM6P collaboration), a Foresight Capacity Building program (FCB) was launched in 2019. More than 250 people (mainly students, teachers, researchers & senior executives) attended the FCB's events and trainings (conferences, workshops, webinars, executive trainings, Bachelor & Master level courses).
Sub-theme activities:

- A continuous training in foresight at UM6P, offering elective courses on 3 levels: Bachelor 2nd year (foresight fundamentals), Bachelor 3rd year (organizations foresight & decision-making) and Masters (methods & implements)
- A doctoral program in foresight (UM6P & CNAM joint supervision): The theses submitted will offer concrete recommendations to public, private, national or international actors;
- Executive formations for senior executives all across Africa;
- The launch of an online platform by & for Africa (universities): Centralizing tool for educational resources in foresight.

**Partners:** OCP Foundation and Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P)

- *New World/COVID-19 Labs, young people envision African cities that are resilient, peaceful and sustainable by 2063.*

**Country:** Gabon

Continental scale implementation of a pilot experiment conducted in 2019 in Gabon around the conceptual triptych (Future of Cities-Prospective-Youth), this project aims to strengthen the anticipatory capacities of young people while allowing them to contribute to the construction of a prospective vision of their city resilient (to epidemics and natural disasters), peaceful and sustainable by 2063. It aims to promote the innovative concept of «New World Laboratories», as a forward-looking tool involving youth, in the framework of the development and implementation of urban public policies.

**Partners:** Ministries in charge of the city, municipalities and UN Habitat.

- *Supporting Youth-led Social Innovation in Southern Africa*

**Countries:** SADC countries

The main objective of this project is to strengthen and support youth social innovations, both proactive and reactive, for the promotion of youth development and transformation, as well as socio-economic development of the region. A regional campaign was initiated around the objectives of the project, which is aimed at identifying, nurturing, and safeguarding youth social innovations focusing primarily on nine countries. This project involves various components that will allow youth to innovate, incubate and share their ideas to inspire other innovators and stakeholders, while solving social challenges in their communities and countries and influencing positive social change. It is proposed that a pilot phase be implemented, focusing on the following areas:

- Ethical issues to address inequality, nepotism, the safeguard of intellectual property, conflict resolution, fake news and anti-corruption;
- Promotion of indigenous knowledge systems in all sectors by incorporating values of Ubuntu;
- Promoting youth civic engagement, regional integration and unity through inter-cultural dialogue and celebration of common heritage;
• Youth social entrepreneurship for employment creation and economic development

**Partners:** Youth Organizations and Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC)

• **Series of Futures Literacy Labs on youth and the future of well-being in 2050**

**Country:** Egypt

In July 2020, UNESCO (Cairo Office in concert with the Research, Policy and Foresight Section in Paris) and the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sport organized a virtual Futures Literacy Lab entitled “Egyptian Youth Rethink the Future of Wellbeing in 2050”. The Lab provided a structured process for helping young participants examine their assumptions and sources that shape their images of wellbeing, and which potentially constrain their creative thinking about possible futures. The Lab was organized against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provided youth with tools for approaching uncertainty, informing perceptions, choice-making and created opportunities to discuss and reflect on these challenges while developing their futures literacy skills.

The Lab identified technological advances as potential contributors and detractors to various dimensions of well-being. It surfaced questions around the future influence of technology and innovation which were identified as subjects for exploration in a future Lab. Youth participants in the Lab have already shared their experiences with over 500 of their Egyptian peers at International Youth Day. These experiences have also been shared at regional and international events in Bangkok, Nairobi and Paris. Further national and regional Labs organized in concert with UNESCO HQ and relevant UNESCO Chairs are foreseen. A small team of facilitators from the UNESCO Cairo Office, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the United Nations Fund for Population Agency (UNFPA) and UN Women have been introduced to the Futures Literacy methodologies. Activities aimed at building the capacity of this team to run and support Futures Literacy Lab in the region are foreseen.

**Partners:** Ministry of Youth and Sports, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, UNFPA, UNWOMEN

• **Sub-theme 4: Youth and the role of sport for social cohesion and peace**

Sport is widely recognized today as a major contributor to economic and social development, and this is clearly reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, sport is about participation, as it brings together individuals, communities and countries and, in doing so, bridges cultural, ethnic and national divides, setting path for inclusion, also in respect to vulnerable people such as disabled, social cohesion, youth and women empowerment and sustainable peace, acting as vehicle of respect, fair play, responsibility, integrity, honesty, self-esteem, sharing and solidarity.

The role of sport to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic has been spelt out in the United Nations General Assembly resolution on “Sport as an enabler of sustainable development” adopted in November 2020, where Member States are encouraged to include sport and physical activity in recovery plans post COVID-19 as well as to integrate sport and physical activity into national strategies for sustainable development to benefit from the added value of sport in improving health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, in implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
As the United Nations’ leading institution for sport and physical education, UNESCO has continued to mobilize sport as a powerful vehicle for social inclusion, gender equality and youth empowerment, and maximized its potential for enhancing peace, through three pillars: (i) quality physical education; (ii) sport values education; and (iii) traditional sports and games.

Important progress has been made by UNESCO and its partners in the development and adoption of common indicators to measure the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport including frameworks such as the Kazan Action Plan (KAP), and the Antananarivo Recommendations (2018), in which the opportunity to foster policy coherence in the context of Agenda 2063 “the Africa we want” was reaffirmed. Besides, both frameworks echo the importance of “traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms”, considered “as a fundamental field of intervention for governments to achieve the full potential of physical activity for personal and social development”. Safeguarding and promoting Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) as sports practices and intangible cultural heritage is a great opportunity for the future and development of sport in African societies.

UNESCO has developed a set of resources to support its Member States in promoting quality physical education, including policy briefs, policy advocacy toolkits and analysis, as well as to help teachers to transfer values of sport, through educational materials. By partnering with sports clubs and national, regional and global sports federations and confederations, UNESCO promotes respect for these moral values among professionals and amateurs alike, including integrity in sport, through the UNESCO Convention against Doping.

Activities and programs related to this sub-theme are:

- **Ministerial Webinar on the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) in Africa**
  
  **Country**: Regional (Eastern Africa)
  
  This Ministerial Webinar on the “Safeguarding and Promotion of Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) in Africa” will contribute directly to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10, 16 and 17, and will aim at examining the potentials of TSG in promoting physical health and wellbeing, respect for difference, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. The main objective of the workshop will be to further specify and endorse the recommendations that were formulated on Quality Physical Education, in particular, and the other areas of KAP identified as priorities in the Africa region and to initiate a mobilization of partnerships within governments in favor of Quality Physical Education and Sport.

  **Partners**: Union of African Traditional Sports and Games, Africa Union Sport Council

  - "Promoting the values of sport through the education, health and governance of sports federations".

**Country**: Regional (Eastern Africa)

This project is structured around the five main components, with the aim to i) create an environment conducive to Quality Physical Education (QPE); ii) promote values of sport in the service of regional integration and peaceful coexistence; iii) enhance women’s leadership in the governance of sports institutions in Africa; iv) institutionalize the fight against doping in sport, and v) facilitate access to sport and sports activities for persons living with disabilities.

  **Partners**: International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), Africa Union, CNOSS, CONFEJES, CONFEMEN, WHO, UNODC, UNFEMMES, IOM, and FISU.
“Making Every School a Health Promoting School”.

**Country:** Global (pilot on Kenya)

WHO and UNESCO have launched a new initiative “Making Every School a Health Promoting School”. The initiative is expected to serve over 2.3 billion school-age children and will contribute to WHO’s 13th General Programme of Work’ target of achieving “1 billion lives made healthier” by 2023 and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in the field of education and health. As part of the initiative, systems-oriented standards have been developed together with indicators to support progress towards achieving the goal.

**Partners:** WHO
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