Preventing Violent Extremism Worldwide
Foreword

Violent extremism is a threat that knows no borders, highlighting the vulnerability of all societies today to the challenges of intolerance, hatred and fear.

There is no single cause for the rise of violent extremism – nor is there a single trajectory leading someone to extremist violence. We know also that ‘hard power’ is not enough to counter a threat that draws on exclusive visions of the world and builds on false interpretations of faith, fuelled by hatred and intolerance. We need ‘soft power’. We need the message of the UNESCO Constitution, to build the defences of peace in the minds of women and men.

UNESCO’s vision is clear. It is not enough to counter violent extremism – we need to prevent it. No one is born a violent extremist. Violent extremists are made and fuelled. Young people are learning to hate – we must teach them peace. Violent extremists promote fear and division – we must respond with opportunities for civic engagement, with skills for intercultural dialogue. Violent extremists preach exclusion and hatred – we must teach human rights, dignity, tolerance and solidarity. Violent extremists breed on mistrust and fears of others, on a lack of confidence in the future. We must provide young women and men with a renewed sense of belonging to society and the global community, with a new vision of the future.

This must start on the benches of schools and by empowering young women and men with the right values, skills and behaviours to make the most of diversity, to engage fully in their societies, to find decent employment, to live as global citizens, defending human rights and fundamental freedoms in every instance. All of this calls for new forms of education, a new focus on advancing cultural literacy, to defend humanity’s shared cultural heritage, new approaches to bolstering media and digital literacy, to strengthen the resilience of societies against the false siren calls of violent extremism, to strengthen the unity of all women and men as members of a single family, sharing aspirations and rights, a past and a future.

This publication offers some examples of partnerships and actions designed to prevent violent extremism. They exist at every level, from local to global, and are drawn from every field of competence of our Organization. We hope they will encourage other partners to offer support and become involved.

Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO
Introduction

Violent extremism is an affront to the principles of the United Nations, embodied in universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. In recent years, the number of attacks by violent extremists has been rising across the world. Not associated with any particular religion, nationality, culture or ethnic group, this threat affects the security, well-being and dignity of many individuals living in both developing and developed countries, posing a global risk for sustainable development and lasting peace. Security responses are important, but to be effective in the long term they must be combined with preventive global and local actions, encompassing education, the sciences, culture, and information and communication.

How UNESCO acts

Responding to this complex challenge calls for cross-sectoral endeavours. This is UNESCO’s strength.

Building on the inter-sectoral approach of UNESCO’s Integrated Framework of Action ‘Empowering Youth to Build Peace’, launched at the ‘Youth and the Internet: Fighting Radicalization and Extremism’ Conference held in June 2015, UNESCO acts to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and values that empower them to engage as responsible global citizens and to be resilient to any form of abuse or manipulation, including radicalization and violent extremism. This is embodied in the landmark decision 197 EX/46 adopted by Member States in 2015, to enhance the Organization’s capacity to provide assistance to countries as they develop strategies to prevent violent extremism.

By aiming to protect human rights and dignity, all of UNESCO’s contributions to prevent violent extremism also advance the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seek to eradicate poverty, deepen sustainability, and leave no one behind. UNESCO is taking the lead on nine of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), starting with those on education and gender equality, and extending to SDGs 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

UNESCO also contributes actively to the overall efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council and the General Assembly to ‘sustain peace’ through long-term action to reduce threats and prevent conflicts. This includes leading contributions to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, launched in January 2016.
Reflecting the importance of its engagement and achievements, UNESCO is co-chairing the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Prevention of Violent Extremism, plays a leading role with the Secretary-General’s High Level Action Group on Preventing Violent Extremism, and is an active member across all relevant working groups of the CTITF.

At the heart of the United Nations

The United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism focuses on four priorities: (i) education, skills development and employment facilitation; (ii) empowerment of youth; (iii) strategic communications, the Internet and social media; and (iv) gender equality and empowering women. The Plan calls for a comprehensive approach, encompassing not only essential security-based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive steps to address the conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups.

The Plan is an appeal for concerted action by the international community in support of Member States. It sets out more than 70 recommendations to help countries to check the further spread of violent extremism; and it adopts an ‘All-of-UN’ approach at UN’s Headquarters and in the field in order to support national, regional and global efforts to counter this threat.

UNESCO’s action to prevent violent extremism builds on a series of ground-breaking resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council on measures to halt the illicit trafficking of cultural goods and counter the financing of terrorism as well as on counter-terrorist narratives and communications, embodied in United Nations Security Resolution 2199, Resolution 2347 and Resolution 2354, where UNESCO plays a leading role in implementation with partners. This includes also action to take forward Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security.

Mapping PVE actions

There are a total of 222 ongoing and planned UN PVE projects at the global, regional and national level, led by 14 UN entities that had contributed to the 2017 mapping exercise. UNESCO is leading across the United Nations system, working alongside UNDP, UNODC, UN Women, OHCHR, CTITF-UNCCT, UNICRI, UNAOC, DPKO, CTED, DPA, the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, the Office of the Secretary-General Special Envoy on Youth, and the OSRSG-Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Priority action areas

- Education to build resilience;
- Media skills, counter-narratives and online coalitions;
- Youth participation and empowerment;
- Safeguarding cultural heritage, celebrating cultural diversity, promoting intercultural dialogue;
- Building inclusive sciences and sharing natural resources.

Advancing gender equality and empowering girls and women are a red thread throughout all of UNESCO’s action at these levels.
**Education** to strengthen social cohesion and resilience to **violent extremism**

UNESCO supports countries’ efforts to offer education programmes that build young people’s resilience to violent extremist messaging and foster a positive sense of identity and belonging. From this angle, the role of education is not to intercept violent extremists or identify individuals who may potentially become violent extremists, but to create the conditions that build the defences of peace within learners through values, skills and behaviours that reject violent extremism, and by strengthening their commitment to non-violence and peace.

This work is undertaken within the broader framework of Global Citizenship Education, where UNESCO leads the implementation of Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on Education.

- **Global advocacy**
  Working with education specialists from around the world, UNESCO is building a common understanding about how education can contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. Through Global Citizenship Education, UNESCO helps stakeholders to identify concrete and comprehensive educational responses to such threats, and to adapt them to their particular context. To this end, in 2016, UNESCO organized the first-ever International Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education in New Delhi, India.

The work undertaken in the field of education also embraces various activities pertaining to human rights and peace education, Holocaust and genocide education, and activities to combat all forms of intolerance, racism and anti-Semitism.

- **Guidance for teachers and policymakers**
  UNESCO supports key education stakeholders to develop relevant policies, strategies and practices that help to ensure that places of learning do not become a breeding ground for violent extremism and exclusionary world views, but instead seek to advance human rights and tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.
For this purpose, UNESCO has produced two guides, available in several languages:

- **A Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism** that suggests ways to discuss the subject in a classroom context, and thus enhances learners’ capacity to debate controversial issues and develop critical thinking.

- **Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers** that proposes how to prioritize, plan and implement actions for contributing effectively to national prevention efforts.

### Capacity-building for teachers and policy-makers

The Organization also builds capacity for teachers and policy-makers by providing them with information on effective and appropriate interventions that can help prevent violence and promote global citizenship.

An example is the **UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)**. The Institute works with education stakeholders and young people to develop innovative programmes, foster critical thinking and empathy and support public engagement.

In February 2017, UNESCO organized the first capacity-building workshop on the ‘Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education (PVE-E) in sub-Saharan Africa’. Hosted by the African Union in Addis Ababa, the gathering brought together 30 policy-makers, teacher trainers and teachers from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Participants acquired understanding of key concepts and educational measures that can help reduce violent behaviours, and boost resilience to violent extremism. During the seminar, they learned how to create safe spaces for discussing sensitive issues and foster media and information literacy.

UNESCO cooperates with numerous non-governmental organizations that have expertise in the field of PVE-E, and is spearheading projects also in partnership with international bodies like the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, the **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**, and the **Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)**.

With the **Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU)**, UNESCO expanded its **Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** to include resources on PVE-E as well as many others that provide access to research relevant to educating about the Holocaust and, more broadly, genocide and mass atrocities. This interface is available currently in English, French and Korean, and will soon be made available in all UN languages. The resources themselves are presented in the language of publication.

"Teachers are playing a crucial role in helping communities to live in peace. We need to raise their awareness of the concept and the drivers of violent extremism, and how it can be prevented, so that they can use this knowledge in their everyday practice." - Participant of the UNESCO capacity-building workshop on the Prevention of Violence through Education in sub-Saharan Africa, February 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Empowering young women and men to prevent violent extremism

There are currently 1.8 billion young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world. This is the largest youth population ever. One out of ten of the world’s children lives in conflict zones, and 24 million of them are out of school. Political instability, challenging labour markets and limited opportunities for political and civic participation have increased the pressures on young women and men everywhere, increasing their vulnerability to ideologically motivated violence and other forms of extremism. Clearly, any lasting solution must place young people at the forefront. They are the most affected by multiple and often interlinked forms of violence. But they also can play vital roles as agents of positive change, provided that they are nurtured and empowered, through skills development, training and the new forms of engagement.

UNESCO’s response to the Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security puts young people at the very heart of efforts to address the root causes of violent extremism. This focus is perfectly aligned with UNESCO’s Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021) and its integrated framework of action, Empowering Youth to Build Peace.

UNESCO is a member of the Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding, under the framework of the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, which coordinates the work of UN entities, NGOs, youth-led organizations and other partners in support of the implementation of SCR 2250. The Organization is also part of the Steering Committee for the progress study on youth, peace and security, mandated by the SCR 2250. This study will propose a thorough review and in-depth analysis of young peoples’ positive roles in building peace, which will help identify priorities and generate recommendations.
UNESCO’s Youth team is developing a wide range of other initiatives that put young people at the forefront of UNESCO’s response to violent extremism, including:

- supporting Member States in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 to engage young peacebuilders in countering extremism;
- working with youth organizations to improve their skills and capacities and address any challenges they face;
- working with partner organizations to develop national youth policies;
- evaluating digital youth platforms and encouraging civic participation through social media;
- organizing events to promote participation of youth in addressing radicalization;
- undertaking research on the root causes of radicalization to better understand the social, political and economic factors that lead to violent extremism;
- raising stakeholder awareness of the issue;
- strengthening local resistance to equip individuals and youth networks with values, knowledge and skills to exchange, communicate and cooperate peacefully across social and cultural boundaries; and
- foster youth participation in decision-making and processes for ensuring peace and security, thus supporting good governance and countering violent extremism.

I went through the training in life skills and business. I learned how to use a computer. The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative has taken me through an immense transformation. Throughout the training, I have changed inside. My behaviour has changed. Peace is now an integral part of my life.

M.A. Paul
Young man from South Sudan, youth leader at the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, UNESCO partner

UNESCO’s study *Youth and changing realities* (2017) examines how educational experiences, as well as youth attitudes towards gangs, violence and gender identity, shape youth cultures. It also provides recommendations for policy-makers on how to address issues of growing inequality and exclusion, drug trafficking, migratory processes and deportations, family violence, stigmatization and institutional disaffiliation.

The project *Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth)* funded by the European Union promotes inter-regional dialogue, in particular with young people of the southern Mediterranean region. A wide range of activities is implemented together with strategic partners, both national and international, within and outside the UN system, as well as with other EU-funded projects and local civil society organizations. These include the Anna Lindh Foundation, Cartooning for Peace, the European Training Foundation, CELAT at Laval University, Réseau Euromed France, Voices of Youth (UNICEF), as well as MedMedia, Generation What?-Arabic, Open Neighbourhood South and SAHWA.

The *UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement*, National University of Ireland, Galway, the *UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development*, Penn State University, USA, are engaged in a range of activities that support UNESCO in the field of PVE. These include UNESCO and UN expert group meetings, conferences, and research proposals. Together with the *Ministry of Education and Sport of Albania*, UNESCO is supporting the promotion of intercultural and interreligious understanding through education as a means to help prevent violent extremism.
Nurturing culture to prevent violent extremism

Culture is a powerful and unifying force that can help prevent violent extremism and facilitate peace-building and reconciliation. It nurtures a sense of belonging, fosters mutual understanding and opens spaces for critical thinking.

Mobilizing young women and men, who are key actors in the protection and transmission of heritage and the production of contemporary cultural expressions, is essential to building inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies. Active participation in cultural life also provides young people with opportunities to broaden their horizons by highlighting shared histories and experiences, and strengthening their ability to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Through its World Heritage Education Programme and the #Unite4Heritage campaign, UNESCO engages youth in the protection of all forms of heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity to foster more inclusive and peaceful societies.

To this end, throughout 2017, UNESCO is leading 51 World Heritage Volunteers action camps in 32 countries worldwide in cooperation with local youth organizations and communities. These workshops enhance the knowledge of young people about their own and other cultures and strengthen a shared sense of belonging and ownership with regard to cultural heritage. UNESCO also organizes the World Heritage Youth Forums, whose last edition was held in Krakow, Poland, from 26 June to 4 July 2017 in conjunction with the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee. Its goal is to foster intercultural learning and exchanges, promote a pluralistic view of society, and deepen young people’s understanding of the benefits of cultural diversity.

Leading Counter-Narratives

The #Unite4Heritage campaign is a global social media movement powered by UNESCO to craft counter narratives rooted in heritage values, human rights and respect for cultural diversity.
Launched by Director-General Irina Bokova in Baghdad in March 2015 in response to the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in conflict zones, the campaign calls on everyone to stand up against intolerance and hatred, to celebrate the places, objects, cultural traditions and shared values that make the world such a rich and vibrant place.

UNESCO is also leading the fight against ‘cultural cleansing’ – the deliberate targeting of cultural heritage as an attempt to destroy the legitimacy of others to exist – in its efforts to defend humanity’s cultural diversity. It is spearheading the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2347 on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict, which emphasizes the central role of UNESCO in preventing and countering the illicit trafficking of cultural property, a source of financing terrorism, and recognizes the distinctive role of culture as an instrument for dialogue and reconciliation.

For more information:
http://whc.unesco.org/en/wheducation/
http://www.unite4heritage.org/.

Our ancestors took good care of cultural heritage sites, as they meant a lot to them. Cultural heritage is the human being’s imprint in the world. It is a way to express identity, beauty and authenticity and needs to be protected.

Irena Lüthon, Palestinian university student and volunteer at a #Unite4Heritage campaign event.

The Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNESCO are working together to develop culture and creative industries in Afghanistan through a newly established Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Recognizing the power of culture as a driver of social and economic development, and a force for unity and cohesion, this long-term initiative was launched to support the National Program for Culture and Creative Economy (NPCE). The Program prioritizes culture in the country’s policies and strategies to create jobs and improve livelihoods, focusing on three areas: (i) safeguarding cultural heritage, (ii) developing a network of cultural centres across the country to foster heritage education, and (iii) promoting creative industry for employability and job creation – all of which work to prevent violent extremism.

As part of efforts to ensure implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2199 on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, UNESCO has partnered with INTERPOL, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the UN Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. The resolution includes legally-binding measures to counter the illicit trafficking of artefacts from Iraq and Syria, and recognizes the defence of cultural heritage as a security imperative. Furthermore, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2253, which calls on States to ‘move vigorously and decisively’ to cut the flows of funds and other financial assets and economic resources to individuals and entities on the ISIL (Da’esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List, UNESCO has intensified cooperation with the art market sector to strengthen policy dialogue and raise awareness about the link between the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and terrorism.

Following the destruction of Mali’s unique cultural heritage in Timbuktu in 2012 by armed groups, UNESCO and the Government of Mali immediately launched an ambitious heritage rehabilitation programme for the country in January 2013. It included the reconstruction of 14 of the 16 Timbuktu mausoleums inscribed on the World Heritage List – guided by the belief that culture is an essential source of community pride and identity, and vital for peace-building. The reconstruction of Timbuktu’s physical fabric, which has made use of traditional masonry practices and built awareness in communities about the significance of local heritage places, is a significant first step towards also reconstructing the social fabric and promoting healing and reconciliation.
Preventing **violent extremism** on the **Internet**

The radicalization of youth as a source of violence is becoming a major challenge for many societies today, threatening the security and fundamental rights of citizens all over the world.

With a mandate to foster cooperation and solidarity through communication and information, UNESCO supports its Member States and civil society to prevent violent extremism and radicalization on the Internet.

As violent extremist groups are ever more effective in using Internet and social media to promote hatred and violence, UNESCO’s work to counter online radicalization leading to violence is having an increasing significance for its Member States. Through concrete initiatives to foster youth empowerment through ICTs, as well as critical thinking, tolerance and respect for universal values, UNESCO is equipping young people with the necessary knowledge and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) skills so as to expand their social choices, build new forms of global citizenship, and become more resilient to manipulation when using Internet and social media.

In 2015, within the framework of its Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), UNESCO led the first-ever international conference on ‘Youth and the Internet: Fighting Radicalization and Extremism’, which brought together experts and decision-makers to share policy intervention experiences, projects and processes for reducing the use of the Internet as a tool for attracting young people to extremist ideologies and radicalism. The conference sensitized Member States and partners about the risks of this threat, and pointed to the urgent need for sustained international attention and global action in support of Member States. At this Conference, UNESCO also launched its cross-sectoral initiative ‘A New Integrated Framework of Action - Empowering Youth to Build Peace: Youth 2.0 – Building Skills, Bolstering Peace’. 
This was followed in 2016 by the international conference ‘Internet and the Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting and Living Together’, co-organized by UNESCO, IFAP and the Government of Québec, with the support of the Canadian Government. The resulting ‘Quebec’s Call for Action’ (‘Appel de Québec’) called upon the international community to take multidimensional action to combat violent extremism. In this respect, Canada has provided support for the UNESCO inter-sectoral project ‘Prevention of violent extremism by strengthening capacities of young people in Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia’.

UNESCO also promotes independent and professional journalism to counter the negative impacts of fabricated news stories, propaganda and rumours. Credible journalism based on facts and critical analysis is essential for sustaining policies that recognize human rights and dignity.

In fighting radicalization of young people in cyberspace that leads to violent extremism, UNESCO is playing a central role in cooperation with all major stakeholders to ensure that the Internet remains a safe space enabling young people to learn, socialize, express and realize their aspirations in the spirit of dialogue and tolerance. Thus, by acting effectively to bolster the Internet as a force for exchange, innovation, creativity, and, ultimately, peace and security, UNESCO is achieving one of the most important objectives of its constitutional mandate.

UNESCO has an agreement with the Ministry of Education in Lebanon and the Lebanese University to mainstream global citizenship education (GCED) and the prevention of violent extremism into national teacher-training programmes. It is also collaborating with a consortium of universities in the Arab States to develop a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Intercultural Dialogue Competences.

“Pulling hate material from the Internet will never be enough to curb the phenomenon of violent extremism, because [whenever] one website goes down, two or three more are up the very next day. Simply taking down the content doesn’t address the problem. You need to engage the speakers who are promoting radicalization and hate online and prepare our communities to respond/counter them with better arguments and facts.

Ross LaJeunesse, Head of International Relations, Google

In 2017, the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, in cooperation with UNESCO and the Rotary Club of Beirut, organized an international conference on ‘Youth and ICT: Preventing Violent Extremism in Cyberspace’, third in the series of events presented by UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Information for All Programme, IFAP. The conference brought together some 200 experts from 20 countries. It provided an opportunity to exchange experiences, to explore ways of preventing discrimination and radicalization leading to violent extremism on the Internet. The conference’s Final Statement calls for adopting and implementing measures to prevent the online propagation of violence, to consolidate youth defences against extremist thought, and to encourage use of the Internet to promote a culture of peace.
Inclusive **sciences** and sharing natural resources to prevent **violent extremism**

Building more inclusive sciences and sharing natural resources are important for preventing the rise of violent extremism, through dialogue and cooperation.

With the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and other partners in the region and beyond, UNESCO has implemented scientific projects and activities to help promote sustainable development and build a culture of peace. Through its International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, it has improved scientific understanding about Lake Chad’s functioning and the state of its surrounding environment, while also developing institutional capacity for better management of the lake and its ecosystems.

Building on this, UNESCO has implemented a project on transboundary natural resources in Africa. This project (i) reviewed the state of relevant knowledge for the management of natural resources of the Lake Chad Basin; (ii) strengthened the capacity of the LCBC and affiliated institutions for integrated water resources management and cooperation for peace and development; and (iii) produced a feasibility study on the creation of a transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) and the nomination of the lake as a World Heritage site. The Basin’s main areas touch five countries bordering the lake: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. This project has laid the foundation for the newly funded initiative by the African Development Bank, entitled: ‘Applying the model of transboundary biosphere reserves and World Heritage sites to promote peace in the Lake Chad Basin by the sustainable management of its natural resources’.

UNESCO is also establishing the ‘Knowing our Changing Climate in Africa’ project. This focuses on the indigenous knowledge of pastoralist groups across sub-Saharan Africa about the weather and climate, and aims to build capacities and empower vulnerable and indigenous communities.
The project also expects to conduct transdisciplinary research on building synergies between science and local knowledge in order to enhance climate change adaptation, sustainable development and peace building.

“Safeguarding Lake Chad means improving the resilience of over 30 million people. Involving local communities is essential and we are pleased to be able to count on UNESCO’s expertise in natural resources management and promoting intercultural dialogue in order to cultivate peace.”

Sanusi Imran Abdullahi, Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission

The formulation of appropriate Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy instruments in the African region is important for promoting peace and stability, and fostering conditions that hinder the development of violent extremism.

To this end, Spain supports Masters and PhD scholarships, as well as national STI funding in the region to encourage the development of spaces for inclusive research and exchanges among scientists and other stakeholders – including indigenous and local communities.

The participation of African scientists and local knowledge holders in international research programmes for sustainability, such as Future Earth (supported by Sweden), is important for the further involvement of scientists from diverse backgrounds and cultures in an equitable way. These measures aim to promote exchange and cultural rapprochement that can counteract violent extremism.
Snapshots of action across the world

On 8 March 2016, at UNESCO Headquarters, a Panel discussion was organized on the theme ‘Violent Extremism and Radicalization: Women as Victims, Perpetrators and Agents of Change’ with participation of women leaders, researchers and activists. The discussion focused on women’s roles in the rise in violent extremism, as perpetrators, as victims and as advocates. The discussion raised awareness on the different roles and perceptions of women and men in a context of violent extremism and radicalization; it identified and supported women’s experiences and capacities as peace-builders and agents of change; and it acknowledged and celebrated, on the occasion of International Women’s Day, the efforts of the many women who claim their power to say ‘no’ to violent extremism.

‘The Prevention of Violent Extremism through Youth Empowerment in Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia’, is supported by the Canadian Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Programme and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT). It is a multi-sectoral project that aims to support young women and men in practicing new forms of global solidarity.

The Youth Peacemaker Network in South Sudan, in cooperation with Forest Whitaker’s Peace & Development Initiative, trains and equips young women with the skills they need to promote peace and sustainable development within their communities.

In November 2016, social media broadcast the video ‘The Value of Heritage’. This was produced by the UNESCO Beirut Office in the framework of the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project, funded by the European Union and supported by the Flemish Government and the Government of Austria. It sensitizes the audience to the value of their own heritage at a time when many populations are facing the loss of their heritage, customs and identity. Protecting culture today is essential for building peace tomorrow.

Unlocking the power of cities to enhance inclusion and diversity is at the core of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities’ mandate. ICCAR promotes international cooperation between cities to strengthen global solidarity and collaboration, as well as inclusive urban development free from violence and discrimination.

UNESCO’s partnership with the Aladdin Project advances training, intercultural dialogue and tolerance for mutual respect and understanding in the struggle against all forms of racism and anti-Semitism.
As lead Agency for the **International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures** (2013-2022), UNESCO engages a variety of actors in conflict prevention, including youth, civil society leaders and activists, decision and policymakers, the private sector and researchers. This effort lies at the heart of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres's focus on preventing conflicts and sustaining peace and respect for human rights.

UNESCO’s **General Histories of Africa** and the recently completed UNESCO collection on **The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture** are unique resources exploring humanity’s rich diversity and the exchange and dialogue that characterise the history of all societies and cultures.
Support UNESCO’s Action

Effective responses to prevent violent extremism require an efficient and concerted mobilization of all UNESCO Member States and partners. The engagement and support of all stakeholders are key to achieve our common goal to strengthen the foundations of lasting peace and sustainable development.

Building on human rights and shared values, we must respond to the threat that extremist violence poses to national and international security with action across the board, nurturing the ‘soft power’ of education, culture, the sciences, and communication and information.

This is UNESCO’s commitment.

Join us on this frontline to build a more secure, more inclusive and just world for all.

For more information, please see:
http://en.unesco.org/preventing-violent-extremism

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