



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM
UN Counter-Terrorism Centre

YOUTH PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PVEI



JORDAN
LIBYA
MOROCCO
TUNISIA



Co-funded by: **Canada**

"If we had opportunities to exercise our power and agency, then our potential could be transformed. What's making us vulnerable is that lack of opportunity."

Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security (2018)



Foreword

Youth make up almost 1.2 billion of the world's population, and this number is expected to grow. Likewise, nearly 1 in 4 youth (aged 15-29) is affected by violence or armed conflict in some way.

Resilience concerns an individual's will and ability to overcome challenges and develop in a healthy and positive way in spite of difficulties. Hence, strengthening youth resilience to all forms of violence is a key component for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Resilience exists within all individuals, and the way it manifests itself is highly dependent on young people's social, economic and political environments. When youth are provided with opportunities for meaningful engagement and their skills strengthened, they are more likely to capitalize on their resilience in a positive manner. For this reason, youth are the world's most important asset in peacebuilding.

Per Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security, as well as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, we recognize that increased investment in the success of young people is a necessary step in preventing and countering violent extremism. The UN Youth Strategy "Youth 2030" established as its fifth priority supporting young people to act as catalysts for peace and resilience.

Through its flagship project "Prevention of Violent Extremism through Youth Empowerment in Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia," UNESCO aims to create opportunities for young people to engage as change-makers and peacebuilders in their communities, and beyond.

This UNESCO-UNOCT Project is co-funded by Canada.

The Project

WHY

Violent extremism threatens the security and fundamental rights of citizens all over the world, and undermines the attempts of many countries to achieve sustainable peace. Many violent extremist organizations work by recruiting disenfranchised youth and inciting them to commit acts of violence.

This project focuses on meaningful youth engagement because we believe that enhancing the resilience of young people will prevent their involvement in violent extremism and instead transform them into agents of positive change.

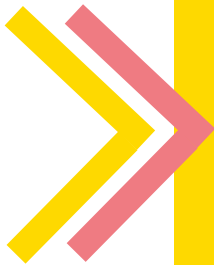
We provide a framework for action that mobilizes UNESCO at multiple levels to provide young people with opportunities, knowledge and capacities to foster dialogue and cooperation in furtherance of PVE.

WHO

Youth are both partners and beneficiaries in this project, particularly those who are actively engaged in peacebuilding initiatives and working to safeguard cultural heritage, diversity, and human rights.

Other key partners include media institutions, education stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners trained to facilitate roles for enhancing global citizenship and peace.

Eliminating the exclusion of youth and advancing their rights is a primary step towards the prevention of violent extremism. Therefore, the project's inclusive and multidimensional approach is crucial to ensuring ownership by key stakeholders and beneficiary groups, including national and local authorities responsible for youth issues, as well as youth-led and youth-focused organizations at local and national levels.



**"Youth shouldn't be on
the table, but around
the table."**

Progress Study on Youth,
Peace and Security (2018)

OBJECTIVES

- **Youth engagement** – The actions of young people and youth organizations are enhanced so that they become key actors in preventing violent extremism and recognize their active roles as global contributors to a sustained peace.
- **Education** – Prevention of violent extremism is mainstreamed through formal, non-formal and informal education. The education sector and other relevant sectors of society contribute to national strategies to prevent violent extremism.
- **Communication and Information** – Media professionals, students, and youth communities, both online and offline, are mobilized and their capacities are strengthened to counter radicalization and hate speech.
- **Culture** – A culture of citizenship, mutual understanding and human rights is strengthened through the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity.

HOW

This project adopts an inclusive, multidisciplinary and participatory approach across youth, education, culture, and communication and information by:



- Equipping youth with knowledge, tools and skills to participate in peacebuilding.
- Fostering exchange and cooperation beyond social, cultural and linguistic boundaries.
- Supporting youth civic engagement and youth-led solutions.
- Promoting intercultural understanding and human rights.

This approach ensures that young people are heard and engaged as change makers in their communities.



“Youth-led peace and security work is innovative and resourceful in using art, sport and media.”

Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security (2018)

WHERE

In the Arab region, young people represent 60 percent of the population. While they face complex challenges, including low productivity jobs, income inequality and insufficient job creation, they also have proven to possess the willingness, ideas and energy needed to tackle these issues.

This project is implemented in four countries: Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. In each of these countries, the ongoing activities reach youth from both urban and rural areas, ensuring inclusion and diversity.



**JORDAN
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Our Work

Examples from the Field

JORDAN

Disinformation, cyberbullying and hate speech are becoming increasingly prevalent in our societies. Fortunately, Media and Information Literacy (MIL) trainings are helping youth to combat these issues. Youth media organizations, youth organizations, and young journalists from the broad media spectrum were equipped with MIL knowledge and tools, directly reaching over 400 young people. Furthermore, almost 30 young Jordanians received support to implement their own youth-driven peacebuilding initiatives throughout the country. Because art can be a powerful medium to convey human rights and positive messages, a series of workshops on self-expression were held in different governorates, reaching over 90 young people. Finally, 38 young members of the National Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) received support to organize a training of trainers for strengthening capacities on YPS as well as SCR2250 and SCR2419.

LIBYA

“What does a peaceful and hate-free life look like to you?” Young people from across Libya reflected on this question at a civic engagement workshop which covered topics such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, and MIL. Participants put their new knowledge to the test, designing “graduation projects” with their own unique ideas to counter hate speech and promote peacebuilding. Young Libyan journalists also received trainings in the areas of conflict-sensitive reporting, journalism in time of war, and addressing misinformation. Furthermore, in partnership with a youth-led organization, a pioneering program will be developed to teach young women coding and programming, and to support them in creating value-added solutions that contribute to peacebuilding in the country.



MOROCCO

The *Houdoud* (Frontiers, in Arabic) initiative, launched in partnership with the Chair Fatima Mernissi, stood against violent extremism by providing spaces for intercultural dialogue through the creative arts. It brought together researchers and artists, and included a series of conferences and workshops, reaching over 350 young people. Furthermore, to promote the right and access to culture for all, theatre workshops were conducted in schools reaching over 130 students in Tangier, Rabat and Marrakech. The work done throughout the year concluded with a final itinerant festival in a theatre-truck, in partnership with the youth-led theatre company, Spectacle pour Tous. Additionally, focus groups and a national consultation were carried out to identify how the education system can contribute to the national PVE strategy, under the broader framework of Global Citizen Education.



TUNISIA

Online education is a dynamic and evolving field and the MOOC “Radicalization and Terrorism” is one such example. The online course counted with over 3,000 engaged learners. Furthermore, over 600 young people participated in a debate cycle to raise awareness about radicalization in universities all over the country. Over 150 young people also participated in an initiative aimed at fostering youth storytelling about Kerouan’s heritage, employing culture as a lever for peacebuilding. The initiative concluded with a collective festival called *Ahkili Aliha* (Tell Me, in Arabic). Lastly, 180 journalists took part in trainings on hate speech, violent extremist discourse, as well as journalist online and offline security.



Regional

32 young people from the Arab States who are working in the field of heritage and/or peacebuilding came together at the Arab World Heritage Young Professionals Forum conducted in Tunisia. The Forum aimed to harness the agency of young people and discuss their critical roles as global citizens towards peacebuilding, through the protection, preservation and promotion of World Heritage. Likewise, the global communications campaign “Let’s talk about peace, #PeaceMonth” launched on the occasion of International Day of Peace aimed to engage with young people from all over the world and learn about their role in peacebuilding as well as to share the multidimensionality of peace through education, media and information and culture. The campaign reached out to over 340,000 people, while engaging around 10,000 users.

Facts & Figures

+ 5000

young people reached

5

youth-led partner organizations

+ 30

capacity development and training workshops

+ 15


seminars and international conferences

4

knowledge products



Gender and PVE



In the past, men were considered as the main focus of PVE efforts, with the assumption that violent extremism only targeted men. Conversely, women were seen as the victims of violent extremism. However, this paradigm has shifted, and more attention is now being paid to the role of women in the context of violent extremism. Promoting gender equality entails ensuring equal opportunities, and realizing the contrasting or similar experiences of young people of different genders in relation to radicalization and exposure to violent extremism. Understanding the gendered dimensions of violent extremism, that is, how gender can impact identities, roles, motivations and relationships in the context of violent extremism, allows for more effective PVE programming.

This project includes gender mainstreaming as one of its domains of action, in line with UNESCO's Operational

Strategy on Youth, SDG 5, and UN Security Council Resolution 2242, which urges the adoption of gender as a cross-cutting issue within PVE efforts. As such, a series of gender-specific activities within the project have been included. For example, MIL trainings for young journalists and youth organizations have all incorporated a gender-sensitive reporting approach. This includes the necessity to achieve a balanced presence of people in all of their diversity in the media, to use a gender-fair language and to eliminate stereotypes. Radio programs within the project have also created spaces for young people to discuss gendered issues, such as online harassment, hate speech and child marriage. Likewise, the project ensures the use of gender-inclusive language as a way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. Furthermore, gender balance is considered as a criteria in the selection of youth and youth organizations that participate in trainings and workshops.

CONTACT

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