**United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization**

Item **4** of the provisional agenda

UNESCO SHS STRATEGY ON AFRICAN YOUTH: TOWARDS AN ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA (2009-2013)

SUMMARY

Source: 184 EX/4 (page 34)

This Strategy has been developed by the SHS Sector in cooperation with the African Group at UNESCO and in consultation with UNESCO programme sectors, central services and field offices in Africa. It was finalized through a series of consultations with a number of partners and key stakeholders: Member States, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, regional economic communities and regional intergovernmental organizations, youth organizations, academia, the private sector and the United Nations system partners. The Strategy shares many common elements with the draft 10-year AU Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and Development in Africa (2009-2018) and UNESCO will collaborate closely with the African Union Commission for its implementation.

The Strategy provides a guiding framework for UNESCO's action on Youth in Africa and has been developed based on the framework of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013, the 34 C/5 and 35 C/5 documents and taking into account the priority accorded to Africa and gender equality as global priorities. Fully aligned with the scope of the 2010 International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", the Strategy also serves as a catalyst for collaboration among key stakeholders in the field of youth.

The necessary financial resources (US $3,000,000, in addition to the requirements of the proposed voluntary fund for young social entrepreneurs) will need to be sourced essentially through the mobilization of funds from bilateral, multilateral and private sector partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGY

1.   The current generation of youth represents more than 18% of the world's population. As well as being the best educated generation so far, they are ambitious, flexible and best able to adapt to changing realities. Considering their energy, creativity and networking capacity, youth have a significant potential of contributing towards national development and addressing the social implications of the current crises. At the same time, it is these current crises that further aggravate existing challenges: access to basic services, enjoyment of human rights, education and employment opportunities.

2.   A priority group for UNESCO, youth are key actors and partners in its mission to "*contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue*". According to the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013, UNESCO addresses youth issues, particularly violence among youth and other issues affecting their welfare, with a particular focus on specific groups and promotes youth participation, by engaging and empowering youth to contribute towards the development of their societies.

3.   The UNESCO SHS Strategy on African Youth seeks to promote youth civic engagement in Africa to empower youth as agents of peace and key actors in their communities, to assist them in making successful transitions from school to the workplace and to prevent violence. The Strategy provides a guiding framework for UNESCO's action on youth, developed within the strategic objectives of the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013, the respective biennium programmes and budgets and the priority accorded to Africa and gender equality. It has been elaborated by the SHS Sector in cooperation with the African Group at UNESCO and in consultation with programme sectors and field offices in Africa, through a participatory process involving a large number of partners: Member States, the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank, regional economic communities and regional intergovernmental organizations, youth organizations, academia, the private sector and the United Nations system.

4.   The Strategy also serves as a catalyst for collaboration among key stakeholders acknowledging that UNESCO alone cannot address the multiple challenges facing youth. It is envisaged as a tool to develop a shared vision for coherent action with key partners in the region and therefore provides a solid basis for forging global alliances. It is fully aligned with the scope of the 2010 International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding" and presents an opportunity to convene key stakeholders in identifying and addressing the challenges facing youth in Africa, as well as anticipating future challenges. UNESCO's intervention will focus on three objectives:

I.   Knowledge building and management: UNESCO will work with the AUC and key partners to support the collection, evaluation and dissemination of disaggregated socio-demographic data, standards, experiences and technical expertise. Such effort will enable the identification of priorities and gaps in data and research and will provide the different youth stakeholders with the necessary information and tools to formulate evidence-based policies and programmes. This will also empower youth themselves to effectively participate in knowledge societies and will support academic institutions in the development of research programmes on youth issues.

II.   Policy dialogue and policy development: UNESCO will work with the AUC and key stakeholders to assist governments to develop policies addressing the challenges affecting African youth, with their participation. UNESCO will also promote policy dialogue initiatives among governments, academia, youth and development partners to translate research into policy options. In the context of the International Year of Youth, the AUC and UNESCO will work together to further ratify and raise awareness of the African Youth Charter, a fundamental framework for the development of policy responses affecting youth in Africa.

III. Youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion: the Strategy will aim at promoting a meaningful and effective involvement of youth in political and social spaces. In Africa, this effort will focus on fostering an inclusive and democratic representation of youth concerns, as well as supporting youth-led action at community level. UNESCO will work with the AUC to revitalize the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), consolidate youth networks and promote the establishment of democratic, representative and inclusive National Youth Councils. It will also focus on the transition from school to the workplace by seeking to establish a Fund to support youth social entrepreneurship as a means for youth to acquire the necessary skills to become economic entrepreneurs.

5. Considering the wide range of stakeholders involved in youth development, the effectiveness of the Strategy is linked to convening a broad-base partnership for its implementation and follow up. The Strategy shares common elements with the 10-year Plan of Action for Youth Development and Empowerment in Africa (2009-2018) of the AUC. In this context, the AUC and UNESCO will collaborate to implement initiatives identified in both the 10-year Plan of Action and the UNESCO SHS Strategy, in cooperation with major partners and stakeholders in the region. It will also require a sustained coordination from Headquarters and a flexible intersectoral and field cooperation for the development of the activities.

6. The implementation of the Strategy will be monitored through biennial progress reports. The evaluation process will include a mid-term and a final evaluation report. The necessary financial resources ($3,000,000, in addition to the voluntary Fund for young social entrepreneurs) will need to be sourced primarily through mobilization of funds with bilateral and multilateral partners.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS: A STRONG POTENTIAL FACED WITH SERIOUS CHALLENGES

7. The current generation of youth represents more than 18% of the world's population. As well as being the best-educated generation so far, they are ambitious, flexible and best able to adapt to changing realities. Through their involvement in youth organizations and associations, youth are continuously contributing towards political stability, social cohesion and economic prosperity, by engaging in community action and devising innovative responses to major issues affecting them. Considering their energy, creativity and networking capacity, they have a significant potential to contribute towards addressing the economic, ethical and social implications of the current crises.

> **A word on terminology: defining youth**
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> Youth is best understood as **a transitional phase when a person moves from a time of dependence (childhood) to interdependence (adulthood)**. The United Nations definition of youth (15 to 24 years of age) provides a general statistical framework for the benefit of consistency and comparability, whereas conceptual and operational definitions of "youth" require a certain extent of flexibility. In the African Youth Charter, the definition adopted for youth is *"every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years old"*. For the present Strategy, the implementation of the activities will adapt to the definition used in each African Member State.

8. At the same time, it is these crises that further aggravate already existing challenges facing youth: access to basic services, enjoyment of human rights, employment and education opportunities, and socio-economic integration are some of the key issues that inflict upon youth development. Over 200 million youth live on less than US $1 a day, 160 million are undernourished, 130 million are illiterate, more than 10 million live with HIV/AIDS, 88 million are unemployed and young women continue to face barriers in many areas of development (e.g. gender gaps in access to education; employment and wage discrimination etc.).[1]

9. Constituting a major share of Africa's population (20.4% or close to 198 million people aged 15-24 years old[2] and over 30%, aged 15-35 years old based on the definition used by the African Union[3]), youth are, on average, better connected to the rest of the world than any of the earlier

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[1] United Nations World Youth Report 2005.
[2] United Nations World Youth Report 2007.
[3] Estimate based on data included in the United Nations World Youth Report 2007, page 80, table 3.1 and page 254, table on "youth population indicators".

generations of youth in the region. Increases, for both young men and young women, in the rates related to primary completion, literacy and of the girls to boys ratio in education indicate that youth in Africa are better educated than their parents. Also, the reduction of the adolescent birth rate and the figures relating to comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS point to the progress made towards addressing health and reproduction challenges.[4]

	Literacy rate (15-24 years old)						Primary completion rate						Girls to boys ratio in education				Adolescent birth rate (15-19 years old) /per 1000 women	
	1995-04			2007			1999			2006			Secondary		Tertiary		1990	2005
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	2000	2006	2000	2006		
Northern Africa	85,3	73	79,4	90,8	82,2	86,5	90,4	82,6	86,6	91,9	94	89,8	0,95	0,99	0,68	1	42,9	31,5
Sub-saharan Africa	76	65	70,2	77,2	67,3	72,1	53,1	45	49	59,8	64,7	54,9	0,82	0,8	0,62	0,68	130,6	118,9

10.   Youth in Africa are nowadays more involved in voluntary activities which provide the opportunity to gain livelihood and employment skills while also contributing to national and community development. National governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of building youth capacities and involve youth-led organizations and other civil society institutions in the development of policy responses affecting youth. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT), through its pervasive nature, is causing rapid and fundamental transformations in the lives of youth who use ICT for entertainment, social networking, seeking jobs, gathering information or communicating comments and concerns.[5] Youth appear, therefore, more determined to find options to bridge the gap between opportunities available to them in the continent and what they perceive to be possible in the global arena.

11.   Despite this progress, significant constraints to effective youth development persist as they relate to the region's most acute challenges. Too often, the formative years of African youth are characterized by exposure to deep-seated poverty, deficiencies in basic services, limited access to education, health care, opportunities for decent employment, poor governance and ongoing conflict and war. Compared to other world regions, literacy and secondary school enrolment rates are still very low (e.g. the literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa where only 72.1% of the youth population are literate, whereas in Asia it is 86.5% and in Latin America 96%[6]) while access to post-primary education remains limited in many contexts. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 3 in 10 youths living on less than US $1 per day. Youth make up 37% of the working-age population, but 60% of the total unemployed[7], while access to ICT and to IT skills training remains limited.[8] Among the 10 million youth currently living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, more than 60% (6.2 million) are in sub-Saharan Africa; over 12 million youth have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Africa, leading to the creation of hundreds of thousands of children and youth-headed households.[9] Many more such households have been created by armed conflict: the period 1990-2000 alone saw 19 major armed conflicts in Africa in which youth have been both victims and perpetrators of violence.[10] Also, African youth do not benefit in an equal manner from the opportunities created by globalization in terms of growth and real development. These challenges are even more severe for particular sub-groups within the youth cohort, including girls and young women, youth with disabilities, those living in rural areas or regions suffering from ongoing conflict and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

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4   United Nations World Youth Report 2005.
5   Nigeria's *Learning About Living* portal (http://www.learningaboutliving.org/south), Report of the United Nations Secretary General on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for youth: progress and constraints with respect to the well-being of youth and their role in civil society, 30 October 2008, A/64/61-E/2009/3, page 13.
6   United Nations World Youth Report 2007.
7   "Youth and Employment in Africa: The Potential, the Problem, the Promise", World Bank 2008/2009.
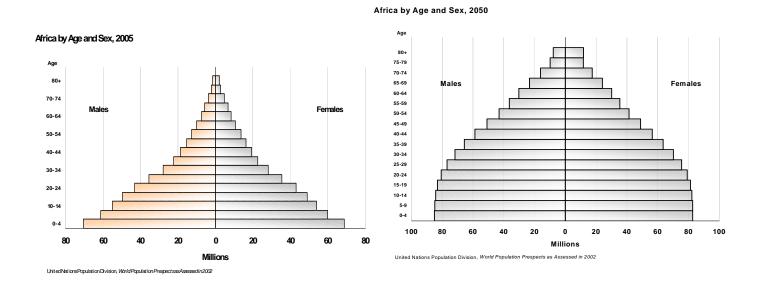8   For more details, see: (1) Report of the United Nations Secretary General on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action for youth: progress and constraints with respect to the well-being of youth and their role in civil society, 30 October 2008, A/64/61-E/2009/3, page 13; (2) 5th African Development Forum on "Youth leadership in the 21st Century": ICT Youth and Entrepreneurship Breakout Session Report.
9   Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2004.
10   World Youth Reports 2005 and 2007.

B.   INVESTING IN AFRICAN YOUTH: AN ASSET FOR PROSPERITY

12.   The population pyramids below depicts the continuing youthfulness of Africa's population. It is clear that youth are Africa's foremost social capital which presents the continent with an opportunity to accelerate growth, reduce poverty and build a sustainable and peaceful future. African youth are key partners and actors for development, peace and reconciliation: owing to their vision, drive and commitment, they are particularly well placed to work towards a lasting dialogue and social cohesion and to establish linkages between the different social actors, while developing innovative ideas. To fully harness this potential, Africa's development agenda should aim at creating an enabling policy environment in which youth could strive to foster an environment that fully protects their rights, that is conducive to their development and empowerment and that adequately prepares them for responsible citizenship. It is indispensable to scale up investment in youth to enable them to participate in development efforts and address persisting challenges.

Africa by Age and Sex, 2005

United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prespects as Assessed in 2002*

Africa by Age and Sex, 2050

United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prospects as Assessed in 2002*

C.   THE INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE CONTEXT AND FRAMEWORK OF ACTION

Youth development: perspectives from the human rights framework

13.   The full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms is a prerequisite to youth development, empowerment and participation. The human rights normative framework at large, ranging from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child to a large number of legal instruments dealing with labour standards, contains ample evidence of the commitments of the international community to the rights of youth. These instruments have equally highlighted the rights of specific groups of youth, such as urban youth, rural youth, students, young workers and youth with disabilities.[11]

The United Nations system framework of action

14.   The United Nations has long recognized that the successful transition to adulthood of young women and men is vital for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Further to the adoption of the "*Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*" (1965), the declaration by the United Nations

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[11]   Guide to the implementation of the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, United Nations Programme on Youth, UN DESA.

General Assembly of the 1985 International Youth Year drew international attention to the potential contribution of youth to development efforts and the goals of the United Nations Charter.[12]

15. Ten years later, the United Nations strengthened its commitment to youth, with the **World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond**. The World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) initially identified 10 priority areas to guide policy and action in the area of youth development. Recognizing the major changes in national and international development environments at the end of the twentieth century and to better align to new challenges of the twenty-first century, the United Nations General Assembly added five additional priority areas in 2005[13]. For each priority area, the WPAY outlines the nature of the challenges facing youth and presents proposals for action to improve their well-being, as well as the means of implementation. The 15 priority areas of the WPAY are clearly interrelated and cut across areas in which organizations of the United Nations system specialize and provide technical advisory

World Programme of Action for Youth	Areas
	Education
	Employment
	Hunger & poverty
	Health
	Environment
	Drug abuse
	Juvenile delinquency
	Leisure-time activities
	Girls & young women
	Participation
	Globalization
	ICT
	HIV/AIDS
	Armed Conflict
	Intergenerational issues

and other services to governments. They therefore form an appropriate foundation for a coordinated collaborative effort of the United Nations system.[14]

16. While the WPAY has been instrumental in guiding the development of national youth policies, it did not provide any guidelines to assess the progress made towards achieving the broad goals it identified. This is all the more important in view of the strong linkages between the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** and youth development priorities, particularly their impact on youth and the role that youth can play in achieving them. To facilitate shaping and clarifying the youth development agenda at national and international level, the United Nations Economic and Social Council has identified a series of **goals and targets for monitoring the progress of youth** in the areas covered by the WPAY.[15] These goals and targets address youth as a specific socio-demographic group (and not merely a part of the general population) and focus on the issues that impinge directly on youth development.[16]

17. The proclamation, by the United Nations General Assembly, of the 2010 International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and mutual understanding"[17] is a crucial development. Twenty-five years from the previous 1985 International Youth Year and only five years away from the deadline for the attainment of the MDGs, the 2010 International Year of Youth brings youth to the forefront of global debates, reiterates their potential to contribute to peace and development and assesses achievements towards development goals in relation to youth.

18. Finally, the formal establishment of the United Nations Interagency Network on Youth Development (February 2010, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris), which brings together all United Nations entities working on youth, responds to the need for greater coherence within the United Nations. By strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant United Nations entities, the Network will be key to increasing the effectiveness, understanding and visibility of the United Nation system's work on youth development, coordinating efforts at global, regional and national

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[12] That same year, the General Assembly also endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth, focusing on youth as a broad category comprising various subgroups, rather than a single demographic entity.

[13] These five areas were elaborated in a supplement to the WPAY, which was adopted at the 62nd session of the General Assembly.

[14] United Nations Programme on Youth, United Nations DESA.

[15] The determination of these goals and targets was conducted through a participatory process involving experts from the various organizations of the United Nations system, academia and representatives of youth organizations. For further details: Commission for Social Development Res. 45/2; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 62/162; Reports of the Secretary General on the follow-up to the WPAY (A/62/61/Add.1-E/2007/7 and A/64/61-E/2009/3).

[16] http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm.

[17] United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/C.3/64/L.8/Rev.1 of 18 November 2009.

level, promoting cooperation with regional bodies and supporting youth involvement in United Nations-led initiatives. This will be of crucial importance during the International Year of Youth which calls for synergies at all levels and foresees a number of United Nations-led initiatives or initiatives in which the United Nations system is involved.

D.   REGIONAL EFFORTS

19.   Recognizing the important role of youth, the **governments of the African countries** have been increasingly investing in youth empowerment as a means of enabling youth to participate in the development of the continent. They have been integrating youth concerns in the development agenda at national, regional and continental level, mainly through the framework of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development. In July 2006, at the Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, the African Member States moved the African youth agenda forward by endorsing the **African Youth Charter**, a basic and legal framework to guide and support policies, programmes and actions for youth development in Africa. The African Youth Charter outlines the rights, freedoms and obligations of African youth and is meant to institutionalize youth participation in national, regional and continental platforms. At the same Summit, the African Union Heads of State and Government declared the year 2008 as the Year of the African Youth and 1 November as African Youth Day.[18]

20. Apart from launching the initiative for the African Youth Charter, the **African Union Commission (AUC)** has been instrumental in **translating these political commitments into concrete action**. Since 2006, the AUC has developed a Programme of Action for the 2008 Year of African Youth, has finalized a Plan of Action to accelerate the ratification, popularization and implementation of the African Youth Charter (2008-2015) and is finalizing a 10-year consolidated and comprehensive **Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018)**, which shares many common elements with the present Strategy. The AUC is also elaborating a feasibility study on the establishment of an **African Youth Fund**, is monitoring the process of revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union and is partnering with a number of stakeholders, including the United Nations system, to promote youth empowerment in the continent.[19]

21.   The **New Partnership for Africa's Development** (NEPAD), with its vision of eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable growth and development in the continent, also recognizes the key role that youth should play in socio-economic development and the promotion of peace and security. The *Strategic Framework for Youth* (2004) provides a continental approach to youth empowerment, fostering an environment conducive to youth development, while drawing on the support of academia and development partners. It foresees an advisor and a "youth desk" that offer direct entry points for young Africans to participate in the new development framework for Africa. The NEPAD Secretariat has also set up an *African Youth Parliament* to ensure that youth are meaningfully involved in the implementation of NEPAD.[20]

22.   Within the United Nations system, the **Economic Commission for Africa** (ECA) has greatly supported the AU and NEPAD efforts on youth development. In November 2006, the ECA held with the AU the **Fifth African Development Forum** (ADF-V) on the theme "**Youth and leadership in the 21st century**". Bringing together youth representatives from the five regions of the continent, Heads of State and Ministers of Youth, experts, youth NGOs and international organizations, the Forum launched the African Youth Charter and reached a Consensus Statement on key actions to strengthen youth participation and empowerment. ECA has recently published an

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[18]   Evaluation Report of the Year of the African Youth 2008, 1st Ordinary Session of the Bureau of the 2nd Ordinary Conference of the AU Ministers in charge of Youth (COMY II Bureau).

[19]   Declaration of African Union Ministers in Charge of Youth for the Year of African Youth, Second Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of the Ministers in Charge of Youth, 12-15 February 2008, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[20]   United Nations World Youth Report 2007.

African Youth Report for 2009[21] and is also ensuring the Secretariat of the Post ADF-V Steering Committee (established to follow up on the ADF-V recommendations) and is working with the AU Commission for the promotion of the African Youth Charter. In addition to these, ECA places particular attention to the contribution of ICT to youth development and supports related capacity-building initiatives for youth groups.

23.   The **African Development Bank** also addresses youth development challenges, namely through education (infrastructures, technical and vocational education and training, higher education), health (strengthening of health systems and services) and social protection (skills building, employment and income generation for vulnerable groups, post-conflict socio-economic reconstruction). Finally, the few successful examples of the **private sector's** involvement in youth issues in Africa focus on employment/income generation, health, education and ICT (e.g. The Private Sector Initiative of the Youth Employment Network for West Africa).

E.   UNESCO'S ACTION IN FAVOUR OF YOUTH AND PRIORITY AFRICA

24.   UNESCO's longstanding commitment to youth has taken a new impetus with the recognition of youth as a priority group for the Organization's action (1993 General Conference resolutions and consecutive Medium-Term Strategies from 1995 onwards) and the elaboration of the *UNESCO Strategy for Action with and for Youth* in 1998. Guided by the WPAY, UNESCO's action in favour of youth is aligned to the vision to "*construct the defences of peace in the minds of men*", as articulated in the preamble of UNESCO's Constitution.[22]

25.   UNESCO considers youth as actors and partners and seeks to "*contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue*" by involving and empowering them to contribute towards positive change.[23] In this, UNESCO's work fully aligns with the 2010 International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding", as it embraces the Organization's approach to youth as agents of peace and key actors in national development.

26.   According to the UNESCO Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013, UNESCO addresses youth issues, particularly violence among youth and other issues affecting the welfare of youth, especially youth in rural areas and marginalized groups as well as unemployed youth.[24] In this context, UNESCO focuses on promoting youth participation and civic engagement through **five functions**:

Governance	Ensure the presence and the effective participation of youth in UNESCO activities
Programming	Strengthen partnerships between UNESCO and youth organizations
Policy development	Provide assistance to Member States in integrating youth concerns and issues into policies and programmes
Advocacy	Act as clearing house of information concerning youth and encourage research addressing youth issues
Monitoring	Cooperate with youth organizations in follow-up and evaluation processes of projects targeting youth

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[21]   "African Youth Report 2009: Expanding opportunities for and with Young people in Africa", United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

[22]   "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed", Preamble, UNESCO Constitution:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[23]   UNESCO, Medium Term-Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), UNESCO's mission, page 7.

[24]   UNESCO, Medium Term-Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), UNESCO's priorities, page 8.

27. In the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013, priority is accorded to the support for development efforts in Africa, with focus on seven key areas,[25] all relevant to youth:

1. Education for All and Millennium Development Goals
2. Quality education, TVET, higher education and teacher training, curricula development, multilingualism
3. Follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration on Science, Technology and Scientific Research for Development
4. Strengthening of national, subregional and regional capacities and human resources
5. Regional integration
6. Cooperation with multilateral, bilateral and private stakeholders, and broader participation of civil society representatives and NGOs in existing mechanisms
7. Assistance for countries in post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction situation

> **1st UNESCO African Youth Forum**
> (24-28 September 2007, Burkina Faso)
> The 1st UNESCO African Youth Forum brought together youth representatives of African countries, national youth councils, regional youth organizations, networks and NGO's. The *"Declaration of Ouagadougou"* provides a series of recommendations for action, highlighting three regional priorities:
> * Promote youth participation in the identification of an agenda for youth, in decision-making processes and in the elaboration of youth policies;
> * Encourage the contribution of African youth to the process of regional integration, to democracy, a culture of peace and human rights;
> * Support the socio-professional integration of youth in urban and rural communities, namely through education and youth entrepreneurship.

28. In addition to the strengthened cooperation with Member States, UNESCO's cooperation with Africa has an increasingly continental and regional dimension marked by the cooperation agreements with the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Regional Intergovernmental Organizations.

F. THE UNESCO SHS STRATEGY ON AFRICAN YOUTH

29. In charge of the Youth Programme within UNESCO since November 2006, the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) has developed the present Strategy to contribute to a comprehensive response to the challenges related to youth development in Africa in regular, post-conflict and post-disaster situations. The Strategy focuses on promoting youth civic engagement to empower youth to be agents of peace in their communities, to assist them in making successful transitions from school to the workplace and to prevent violence.

30. The Strategy provides a guiding framework for UNESCO's action on Youth, developed within the strategic objectives of the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013,[26] the respective biennium programmes and budgets[27] and the priority accorded to Africa and gender equality. It has been elaborated by the SHS Sector in cooperation with the African Group at UNESCO and in consultation with programme sectors and field offices in Africa, through a participatory process involving a large number of partners: Member States, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, regional economic communities and regional intergovernmental organizations, youth organizations, academia, the private sector and the United Nations system.

31. The Strategy also serves as a catalyst for collaboration among key stakeholders acknowledging that UNESCO alone cannot address the multiple challenges facing youth. It is envisaged as a tool to develop a shared vision for coherent action with key partners in the region and therefore provides a solid basis for forging global alliances. It is fully aligned with the scope of the 2010 International Year of Youth on "Dialogue and Mutual Understanding" and presents an opportunity to convene key stakeholders in identifying and addressing the challenges facing youth in Africa, as well as anticipating future challenges.

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25   UNESCO, Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), Priority Africa, page 9.
26   Op. cit footnote 29.
27   UNESCO, Programme and Budget 2010-2011 (35 C/5), Major Programme III, Biennial Sectoral Priority 1, Main Line of Action 2: *Enhancing research-policy linkages in the field of social development and the management of social transformations, including emerging issues relating to youth*; UNESCO, Programme and Budget 2008-2009 (34 C/5), Major Programme III, Biennial Sectoral Priority 2, Main Line of Action 2: *Enhancing research-policy linkages in the field of social development and policies relating to physical education and sports.*

32.   Guiding principles

32.1. <u>A holistic approach to youth development</u>: the Strategy aims to build both the skills and capacities of youth and provide them with opportunities to effectively engage in their societies. It looks into the impact of challenges in different areas affecting, directly or indirectly, youth development and civic engagement (education, health, employment and livelihoods, social integration, sports and recreation) and addresses it in a holistic manner.

32.2. <u>A rights and gender-based approach and thorough contextual analysis</u>: the development of each initiative will be based on a thorough situation analysis and an assessment of the socio-economic and political environment from a human rights and gender-based approach. This will enable a clear analysis of the underlying and root causes of the situation of the different groups of youth, thereby building a strong evidence base for the planning and implementation of the initiative. This will also allow that each initiative contributes to furthering the realization of human rights and contributing to the development of the capacities of "duty-bearers" to meet their obligations and of "rights-holders" to claim their rights.

32.3. <u>Non-discrimination and gender equality</u>: the Strategy supports the equal participation of young women and men "without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".[28] It also promotes the implementation of the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality at policy and programming level.

32.4. <u>A particular focus on disadvantaged or marginalized youth and on youth in post-conflict and post-disaster situations</u>: particular attention will be paid to the needs of and challenges faced by disadvantaged or marginalized youth (indigenous and minority youth, youth with disabilities, young migrants, youth with HIV/AIDS, former offenders, among others), youth in rural areas, unemployed youth[29] and youth in post-conflict and post-disaster situations.

32.5. <u>The participation of youth in the development of policies and programmes that affect them</u>: the Strategy advocates for and reinforces the participation of youth in all stages of the development of policies and programmes that affect them. Youth will also be effectively involved in the implementation of the Strategy. UNESCO will work closely with the National Commissions for UNESCO to partner with youth organizations, networks and NGOs and will ensure a sustained engagement of and consultations with youth.

32.6. <u>Forging global alliances</u>: UNESCO with the African Group at UNESCO and the African Union Commission will prioritize dialogue and cooperation among key youth stakeholders: governments, policy-makers, public authorities, youth organizations and non-governmental organizations, academia and researchers, media, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system. This will not only increase the ownership, effectiveness and impact of each initiative undertaken by the different stakeholders but it will also create a sustained momentum for youth development.

32.7. Contribution to the attainment of <u>internationally agreed development goals</u> and <u>international commitments</u>, as identified in the UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013[30]:

- –   Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- –   The objectives of the New Partnership for the Development of Africa and of the African Union;
- –   Education for All Goals;
- –   2000 Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

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28   See Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2.
29   UNESCO, Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), page 8, "Priorities".
30   UNESCO, Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), page 8, "Priorities" and page 11, "Challenges for UNESCO in an era of globalization".

33. Global Objectives

33.1. Objective I: Strengthen knowledge building and management and promote research on youth issues

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to effectively implement the WPAY, it is necessary to link policy development to a state-of-the-art knowledge, taking into account available evidence on the situation, experiences, values and views of youth to whom policies apply and whose active involvement is necessary to make them work. In line with UNESCO's vocation to serve as a global intellectual clearing-house and think-tank, as a "custodian and repository of knowledge",[31] this objective will seek to advance knowledge, standards and intellectual cooperation on youth. It will contribute to identifying the social, cultural and economic environment relative to youth issues and to laying the foundations for the formulation of evidence-based policies to address current challenges and anticipate future

> **Long-term results:**
> - *Knowledge, data, information and research on youth issues consolidated, evaluated, disseminated and informing policy and programme development;*
> - *Network of researchers on youth established with the participation of young researchers.*

ones. UNESCO will work with the AUC and key partners to support the collection, evaluation and dissemination of disaggregated socio-demographic data, standards, experiences and technical expertise. This will provide an in-depth understanding of youth issues, identify and address relevant gaps in policies and promote related research. This will also empower youth themselves to participate effectively in knowledge societies and will support academic institutions in the development of research programmes on youth issues.

33.2. Objective II. Foster the development of policies and frameworks to address youth issues

The pronounced challenges youth experience in terms of their socio-economic, political and cultural inclusion in a volatile continent are the subject of widespread concern at all levels. The need for adequate policy frameworks to address these challenges is crucial. Such policy frameworks should enable youth to make choices on matters that concern them, to actively influence and shape the political agenda and to participate in all spheres of society. UNESCO will work with the AUC and key stakeholders to assist governments to develop

> **Long-term results:**
> - *Member States assisted in the review, evaluation and development of national policies that address youth issues;*
> - *Mechanisms enabling policy dialogue between policy-makers, researchers and youth organizations established.*

policies addressing the challenges affecting African youth, with their participation. UNESCO will also promote policy dialogue initiatives among governments, academia, youth and development partners to translate research into policy options.

33.3. Objective III: Promote youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion

Youth participation is central to the development of youth and to that of their communities. This is all the more important, since the absence of agency can lead youth to choose negative social roles, including gang membership and participation in personal and political violence. The effective engagement of youth as key partners requires an enabling environment that provides them with opportunities to be seen and heard, to take action and to influence. This entails the recognition of their rights to effectively and meaningfully participate at all levels of decision-making. UNESCO supports youth to develop their skills and effectively exercise their civic and political rights and strengthens national and regional structures to fully and effectively involve youth in political and social arenas. A significant feature of this effort is the UNESCO Youth Forum

> **Long-term results:**
> - *Capacities of National Youth Councils and youth organizations to participate in policy-making and to promote youth civic engagement and social inclusion strengthened;*
> - *Advocacy and support for youth participation, civic engagement and social inclusion ensured.*

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[31]   UNESCO, Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 (34 C/4), pages 12-13.

– a unique regular mechanism within the United Nations system enabling youth participation in UNESCO's highest decision-making body, the General Conference. In addition, UNESCO focuses on the promotion of youth social entrepreneurship as a prerequisite for youth to acquire the knowledge and build the capacity which will enable them to engage in economic entrepreneurship from an early age.

34. **Regional objectives (RO) – axes of intervention** (for a detailed description of the initiatives, see implementation plan in Annex)

Global objective I: Strengthen knowledge building and management and promote research on youth issues	
RO 1: Ensure the compilation and management of information and knowledge on African youth	The availability of consolidated knowledge and data on youth in Africa is limited. UNESCO will work with the AUC and key partners to promote the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information, data, tools, and practices on youth to inform the research agenda and provide a thorough understanding of the current and emerging challenges facing them.
RO 2: Encourage policy-oriented research on issues affecting African youth	Despite the increasing development of social science research in the continent, the investment in youth-specific research is almost inexistent. As a result, the lack of evidence-based policy options hampers the development of effective and accountable policies. The Strategy will contribute to policy-oriented research on youth in the continent and support academic and research institutions in the development of research programmes on youth issues.

Global objective II: Foster the development of youth-related policies and frameworks to address youth issues	
RO 3: Assist Member States in the development of public policies to address youth issues with the participation of youth	Youth in Africa are increasingly being viewed as having a major role to play in the development of policies and governments are beginning to develop, review or implement youth policies and strategies that reflect the youth perspectives. In spite of these positive developments, the policy development processes are hampered by the lack of the capacity (for both policy-makers and youth organizations) to devise and effectively implement mechanisms for effective youth participation in all stages of the policy-development processes. These are equally affected by the absence of concrete policy recommendations founded on evidence-based research. In cooperation with key partners, the AUC and UNESCO will focus on strengthening governments' capacities to develop public policies with the participation of youth. It will also aim at initiating policy dialogue frameworks between government, youth, academia and development partners that would validate the research and identify concrete policy options.
RO 4: Promote the ratification, popularization and implementation of the African Youth Charter	Despite the fact that the African Youth Charter has entered into force since 18 August 2009, large youth audiences are not informed of its content or its potential impact on their lives and the lives of their communities, whereas governments do not have the capacity to address its implications in terms of policy reform. The AUC and UNESCO will seek to address these challenges, by raising awareness of the Charter and by providing technical assistance to the African Governments for its dissemination and implementation.

	Global objective III: Promote youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion	
RO 5: Promote an inclusive and democratic representation of youth at continental and national level	The effective involvement of youth in the development of their societies is irreversibly linked to the existence of democratic and representative structures providing a space for inclusion, expression and exchange. In Africa, the existing structures at both the continental (Pan African Youth Union[32] – PYU) and the national (National Youth Councils) level have been criticized by youth for their lack of representativeness and effectiveness in promoting youth participation and inclusion. The AUC and UNESCO will work together with key partners to revitalize the PYU[33] and consolidate the various regional youth networks in the continent. At national level, they will provide support to the establishment of sustainable, democratic, representative and inclusive National Youth Councils and review of the ones already existing.	
RO 6: Support youth-led action to promote civic engagement and social inclusion	Representative structures at continental and national level cannot ensure effective youth civic engagement and inclusion, unless they are complemented by support for action at grass-roots level: action that can reach out to local populations and positively impact their lives. In Africa today, youth are increasingly involved (mostly on a volunteer basis) in youth organizations, associations and networks. In cooperation with key stakeholders in the region, the AUC and UNESCO will focus on supporting youth-led social entrepreneurship and strengthening youth-led information centres at local level to provide youth and youth organizations with a space where they can access information, meet and exchange, develop activities engaging local populations and responding to their priorities.	

35.   General implementation modalities

UNESCO will work with the AUC for the implementation of the Strategy, in cooperation with the different partners and stakeholders. The Strategy shares many common elements with the AUC 10-year Plan of Action for Youth Development and Empowerment. The successful implementation of the activities and the attainment of the Strategy's objectives is irreversibly linked to five key elements:

35.1 The support of and cooperation with the **Member States**: considering the policy implications of the Strategy, the mobilization of political support for its implementation is a *conditio sine qua non* for its effectiveness and efficiency. UNESCO will prioritize regular consultations with the African Group at UNESCO and advocacy efforts with the Member States through the National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO field offices and regional partners involved in the implementation of the Strategy.

35.2 The establishment of partnerships with **major development actors** in the region and with **youth organizations and networks**. The Strategy provides an opportunity for development partners to unite their efforts, increase their efficiency and produce long-term results. Given the scope and the volume of the initiative, it is indispensable to establish a wider

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[32]   The Pan African Youth Union (PYU) is the apex body for National Youth Coordinating Bodies and Mechanisms in Africa.

[33]   Declaration of African Ministers of Youth, 1st Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Youth, 26-28 May 2006, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

collaboration with all concerned stakeholders to attain the objectives, ensure its effectiveness and sustainability and avoid duplications. The AUC and UNESCO will pursue cooperation at institutional, technical and financial level with a number of partners, including:

> ❖ Member States' Governments (African Member States and Member States maintaining strategic partnerships with the African Union[34])
> ❖ Regional Economic Communities and the Regional Intergovernmental Organizations
> ❖ The Pan African Youth Union
> ❖ National Youth Councils or, in their absence, the most representative youth structure
> ❖ Continental and/or regional youth networks and organizations
> ❖ The United Nations Agencies, Programmes, Funds and Commissions and the World Bank
> ❖ The Group of the African Development Bank
> ❖ The Commonwealth Youth Program
> ❖ The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)
> ❖ The Comunidade dos Paises de Lingua Portuguesa (CPLP)
> ❖ Private sector organizations and foundations

35.3 A **sustained coordination** from Headquarters and a **flexible intersectoral** and **field cooperation**. The implementation of the initiatives in the field will be supported by the UNESCO field offices in the region. The cooperation of the network of National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs, clubs and centres, particularly the "Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa" and all UNESCO programme sectors is equally indispensable for the successful implementation of the Strategy.

HQ	- Building global alliances - Provision of technical assistance and expertise - Guidance and development of tools - General coordination of the initiatives and of the management mechanism - Dissemination of information - Monitoring, reporting and evaluation
Field	- Identification and consolidation of partnerships at regional level - Provision of technical assistance and expertise - Preparation and follow-up of the initiatives - Dissemination of information - Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

35.4 The capacity to disseminate information and receive feedback: the **UNESCO African youth listserv and the regional listservs**, the **UNESCO networks**, the **information networks and platforms** of the AUC and the partners will be key in this regard.

35.5 **A process to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategy: the implementation of the Strategy will** be monitored through biennial progress reports, elaborated by UNESCO in collaboration with the African Union. All reports will rely on data and information received by the AU and UNESCO networks, consultations with and feedback from all stakeholders. The evaluation process will include a mid-term review and a final evaluation (2013-2014). The review will examine, evaluate and reassess the implementation process by highlighting challenges encountered and lessons learnt and suggesting possible adjustments to increase its efficiency. The final evaluation will be carried out at the end of the programme. It will assess the level of attainment of the expected results and the impact of the initiatives.

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[34]   For example: India (Africa-India Forum Summit, April 2008), Japan (TICAD IV, May 2008), Turkey (Africa-Turkey Summit, August 2008), China (Africa-China Summit, November 2006).

> **Global indicative budget for the implementation of the Strategy (2009-2013): $3,000,000**
> This indicative budget will need to be sourced primarily through mobilization of funds with bilateral and multilateral partners. It corresponds to the initiatives foreseen under regional objectives 1 to 5 and does not include the Fund for young social entrepreneurs and the support to youth-led centres, which would be subject to voluntary contributions (regional objective 6).

Abbreviations & Acronyms:

AU: African Union
AUC: African Union Commission
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD: New Partnership for Africa's Development
PYU: Pan African Youth Union
SHS: Social and Human Sciences Sector
UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN-DESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WPAY: World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond

ANNEX

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

UNESCO will work closely with the African Union Commission for the implementation of the Strategy which feeds into the AU 10-year Plan of Action for Youth Development and Empowerment (2009-2018)

Global objective I: Strengthen knowledge building and management and promote research on youth issues					
Regional Objective	**Indicative action**	**Performance indicators**	**Benchmarks**	**Expected results**	**Budget in US $**
RO 1: Ensure the compilation and management of information and knowledge on African youth	Elaboration of compre-hensive reports on the state of the African Youth.	Number and content of reports finalized and made available.	By December 2011, 1 chapter on youth civic engagement in Africa, with focus on the situation of young girls and women, developed as part of a global UNESCO publication on youth civic engagement. By December 2013, 1 report on African youth and the MDGs developed.	Situation analysis of African youth improved. Information and data on African youth compiled.	250,000
RO 2: Encourage policy-oriented research on issues affecting African youth	Increased cooperation with academic institutions (Universities, UNESCO Chairs, institutes, centres) to promote research on youth issues.	Number of cooperation agreements and scope of cooperation developed with academic institutions in Africa. Number of UNESCO Chairs on Youth established in Africa.	2 cooperation agreements signed per biennium for research programmes on the themes prioritized in the African Youth Charter. By 2013, 2 UNESCO Chairs on Youth established in Africa.	Evidence-based policy information available for the development of public policies and programmes relating to or affecting youth. Integration of a thematic window on youth in the national research systems ensured.	300,000
	Development of selected policy papers and policy briefs.	Number of policy papers and policy briefs elaborated, peer-reviewed and made available.	By December 2013, 5 policy-oriented research papers on selected priority themes finalized. By December 2013, 5 collections of policy briefs on the priorities addressed by the African Youth Charter finalized.		

Global objective II: Foster the development of policies and frameworks to address youth issues					
Regional Objective	**Indicative action**	**Performance indicators**	**Benchmarks**	**Expected results**	**Budget in US $**
RO 3: Assist Member States in the development of public policies to address youth issues with the participation of youth	Technical assistance to Member States for the development or review of policies affecting youth with the participation of youth.	Number of countries receiving policy advice (technical assistance) for the development or review of public policies affecting youth.	By December 2013, technical assistance provided in 4 countries.	Capacities of policy-makers to involve youth organizations in the development of policies addressing youth issues ensured. National policies addressing youth issues developed and/or reviewed. Dialogue platforms between policy-makers, researchers, youth organizations and key stakeholders consolidated.	750,000
	Development of policy dialogue mechanisms among decision-makers, researchers, academia, youth organizations and civil society.	Number, quality and impact of policy dialogues to validate research recommendations. Number of mechanisms established at national level to ensure policy dialogue among the various stakeholders.	By December 2012, 4 policy dialogue initiatives leading to succinct policy recommendations organized. By December 2013, policy recommendations integrated in policy development processes in 4 countries. By December 2013, dialogue mechanisms for youth policy formulation established in 4 countries.		
RO4: Promote the ratification, popularization and implementation of the African Youth Charter	Development of advocacy initiatives and awareness-raising for the ratification and the implementation of the Charter	Number of events to advocate for and disseminate the African Youth Charter. Development and dissemination of a youth-friendly version of the Charter.	By December 2011, youth-friendly version of the Charter developed and disseminated. By December 2011, 1 campaign organized at continental level for the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter.	By 2013, number of ratifications of the Charter increased. Commitment of the African Member States to the implementation of the Charter increased. Strengthened capacity for youth organizations and networks to disseminate and advocate for the Charter. Integration of the provisions of the Charter into policies affecting youth facilitated.	500,000
	Technical assistance to Member States for the integration of the Charter's provisions into public policies affecting youth	Number of cooperation projects developed with Member States for the review, evaluation and/or revision of policies to ensure that the Charter's provisions are properly reflected.	By 2013, 4 countries with public policies aligned with the African Youth Charter.		

Global objective III: Promote youth participation in decision-making, youth civic engagement and social inclusion					
Regional Objective	**Indicative action**	**Performance indicators**	**Benchmarks**	**Expected results**	**Budget in US $**
RO 5: Promote an inclusive and democratic representation of youth at continental and national level	Strengthening of the organizational and operational capacities of the PYU and consolidation of regional networks.	Nature of technical assistance provided to the PYU. Number and outcome of online consultations between the PYU and non-member regional and national youth organizations and networks to identify ways to ensure a greater representativeness of the PYU.	By 2013, assistance provided on: - the development of operational and technical capacities (project management, fund-raising, partnerships, information management); - participation in policy development and advocacy; - good governance, representativeness and inclusion. 5 online consultations (1 per region) leading into concrete recommendations and follow-up plans.	Capacity-building and review of the PYU's structure and procedures facilitated. Representative and inclusive National Youth Councils established. Capacity development and cooperation among youth organizations promoted.	1,000,000
	Establishment of sustainable, democratic, inclusive and representative National Youth Councils.	Evaluation of existing guidelines for the establishment of National Youth Councils and finalization of toolkit on the establishment of representative, democratic and inclusive National Youth Councils. Number of countries assisted in implementing the Guidelines. Number of National Youth Councils established or having initiated the review of their structure and procedures.	By December 2011, toolkit finalized and disseminated. By December 2012, 10 countries assisted in implementing the guidelines. By December 2013, 5 National Youth Councils established or having initiated the review of their structure and procedures.		
RO 6: Support youth-led action to promote civic engagement and social inclusion	Support for youth-led social entrepreneur-ship initiatives.	Establishment of a Fund for young social entrepreneurs. Guidelines for the submission of proposals to the Fund developed. Number of projects financed by the Fund.	By December 2011, guidelines finalized and disseminated. By December 2011, mobilization of minimum resources for the launch of the Fund (US $500,000). 10 projects (ranging from US $5,000 to 50,000) financed annually by the Fund in 2012 and 2013.	Effective involvement of youth in community development facilitated. Youth Information Centres strengthened and networking capacity among youth improved.	Voluntary contributions
	Support to youth information centres.	Nature of support provided to youth information centres.	By December 2013, 3 capacity-building and training seminars organized in existing youth information centres.		

INDICATIVE BUDGET

Element	Budget US $
Global Objective 1 1. Regional Objective 1 2. Regional Objective 2	250,000 300,000
Global Objective 2: 1. Regional Objective 3 2. Regional Objective 4	750,000 500,000
Global Objective 3: 1. Regional Objective 5 2. Regional Objective 6	1,000,000 Voluntary contributions
Monitoring and Evaluation (Mid-term Review and Final Evaluation)	200,000
Total	**3,000,000**

This indicative budget will need to be sourced primarily through mobilization of funds with bilateral and multilateral partners. It corresponds to the initiatives foreseen under regional objectives 1 to 5 and does not include the Fund for young social entrepreneurs and the support to youth-led centres, which would be subject to voluntary contributions (regional objective 6).