



**YOUTH**  
PREVENTING  
VIOLENT  
EXTREMISM **PVEI**

JORDAN  
LIBYA  
MOROCCO  
TUNISIA



**#YOUTH4PEACE**

<https://en.unesco.org/preventing-violent-extremism/youth/project>

Co-funded by: 

# Foreword

Youth make up almost 1.2 billion of the world's population, and this number is expected to grow. As of 2016, at least one in four youth (aged 15-29) is affected by violence or armed conflict in some way.

The way youth resilience manifests itself is highly dependent on their social, economic and political environments. When youth are empowered and provided with opportunities for participation, they are more likely to capitalize on their resilience constructively, thus becoming one of the world's most valuable assets in peacebuilding.

Per Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, as well as UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021), we recognize that increased investment in the success of young

people is a necessary step in preventing and countering violent extremism. Most recently, the UN Youth Strategy *Youth2030* established as its fifth priority supporting young people to act as catalysts for peace and resilience.

Through its new and innovative 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 immediate communities and wider societies, and to promote a constructive vision of young people as leaders.

*This UNESCO-UNOCT Project is 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)*



# 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.

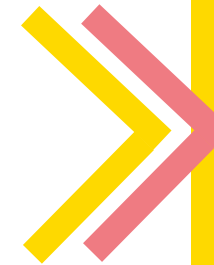
This innovative project focuses on youth empowerment because we believe that nurturing their resilience will prevent their involvement in violent extremism and instead transform them into agents of positive change. We provide a framework for action that mobilizes UNESCO at multiple levels to empower young people with the values, knowledge, capacities and skills to hold exchanges, communicate online/offline and cooperate across social and cultural boundaries.

## WHO

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

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

The participatory approach adopted from the outset, and that continues throughout the implementation process, is crucial to ensure ownership of the project 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.



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

*Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security (2018)*

## HOW

This project adopts an inclusive, multi-disciplinary 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.
- Promoting intercultural understanding and human rights.

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

## 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.

As of now, 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.



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# Our Work

## Examples from the Field

### JORDAN

Fake news, cyberbullying and hate speech are becoming increasingly prevalent in our societies. Fortunately, Media and Information Literacy trainings are empowering youth to combat these very issues. Workshops, in partnership with the Media Diversity Institute and Journalists for Human Rights, equipped youth media organizations and young journalists with Media and Information Literacy knowledge and tools, reaching over 200 young people. A seminar, "Media, Journalism and Culture for Human Rights: Sharing of Experiences" was also held, gathering over 100 youth who participated in diverse sessions and shared artwork related to human rights and tolerance.

### LIBYA

"What does a peaceful and hate-free life look like to you?" Young people from across Libya reflected on this question at a workshop. The event covered important skills and topics such as critical thinking, conflict resolution, and Media and Information Literacy. 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.

### MOROCCO

The "Houdoud" initiative was launched in partnership with the Chair Fatima Mernissi to stand against violent extremism by providing spaces for intercultural dialogue through the creative arts. It brings together researchers and visual artists, and includes a series of conferences, workshops and debates. Additionally, focus groups, a national consultation and a study were carried out to identify how the education system can contribute to the national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism, 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 course will be launched on FUN-MOOC, a platform with over three million subscribers. Furthermore, young professionals and students have developed a conference and a debate cycle to raise awareness about radicalization in universities and communities. Lastly, university students and journalists learned about countering hate speech through Media and Information Literacy trainings.



# Gender and PVE

In the past, men were seen as the key targets of PVE efforts, with the assumption that violent extremism only targeted men. Conversely, women were seen as the victims of violent extremism and mothers of violent extremists. However, this paradigm has shifted, and more attention is now being paid to the role of women as perpetrators and preventers of violent extremism as well. Understanding the gendered dimensions of violent extremism, that is, how gender can impact identities, roles and relationships between women and men, allows for more effective PVE policies.

This project also 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 are envisioned. For example, Media and Information Literacy 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 women and men 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. Furthermore, gender balance is considered as a criteria in the selection of youth and youth organizations that participate in trainings and workshops.



## Contacts

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