



North-South Centre

of the Council of Europe

SEED FUNDING

for grass root initiatives on youth engagement in peace and democratic processes in the Euro-Mediterranean region

Organised by

Financed by



Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean

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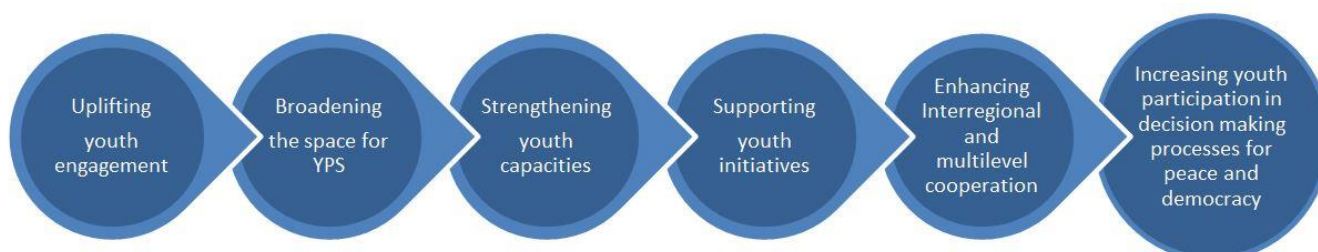
GENERAL OVERVIEW

Since the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), researches, investments and practices for a more youth-inclusive agenda in peace processes are increasing. Young people are now more than ever recognized as the “connecting tissue”¹ bridging the silos of development, human rights, humanitarian affairs, peace and security, from the local to the global level.

The North-South Centre has been working on YPS with the view of including the most recent developments in the field of youth participation and youth policies to achieve its mission: to increase young people and youth organisations’ capacities and facilitates their participation in decision making processes towards the achievement of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) and the [Council of Europe’s youth priority “peaceful and inclusive societies”](#), grounded on the UNSCR 2250 on YPS: a ground-breaking resolution which recognizes that “young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security”.

The UNSCR 2250 identifies five key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and disengagement and reintegration. The North-South Centre is focusing its work on the pillar of participation and it takes stock of the Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security “The Missing Peace”, particularly the Chapter 3.1 which highlights the need to ensure to young people “meaningful political inclusion”.

The specific approach of the North-South Centre on the YPS agenda aims at exploring and fostering the complementary relationship between democratic participation, human rights and peacebuilding. To that end, the North-South Centre has been promoting and participating in a series of initiatives, following a path that goes from uplifting youth engagement in peace and democratic processes to enhancing the interregional and multilevel cooperation to support such youth engagement in peace processes.



The YPS agenda of the North-South Centre is developed in partnership with the key players in the area (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, [United Network of Young Peacebuilders](#), among others) and funded through a transversal scheme of projects and programmes: a Joint Programme funded by the EU: [South Programme III](#): “Ensuring sustainable democratic governance and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean”, the Euro-Mediterranean youth cooperation project funded by the voluntary contributions of Portugal, Spain and Malta and in synergy with the [Network on Youth and Global Citizenship](#) which is directly supported by the North-South Centre.

¹ [Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#)

The [Lisbon Forum 2018](#) on "Youth, Peace and Security in the Euro-Mediterranean region" launched the North-South Centre's YPS agenda, raising awareness and recognition among all the major stakeholders of the Council of Europe on youth engagement in peace and democratic processes. A following *quadrilogue*² seminar organised in the framework of the [7th University on youth and global citizenship](#) allowed for a structured dialogues between decision makers and youth representatives, exploring the current policy and programmatic orientations and assessing the needs of young people to better interact in peace-related decision-making processes in the Euro-med region.

A [follow-up seminar on "enhancing interregional and multilevel cooperation to support local youth engagement in peace processes"](#) took place in Jordan, following on the Lisbon Forum 2018 conclusions by focusing on how interregional cooperation and international mechanisms already in place can support the development of national and local youth inclusive strategies in peacebuilding process. The two-day seminar identified the "take-ins" that interregional cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and good practices from different stakeholders could bring in defining a more youth-inclusive global agenda for peace. In this process, the transformative potential of young people was further enhanced as a tool for Council of Europe and other international platforms to promote and protect human rights, democracy and rule of law.

The outcomes and the recommendations of these events pointed out the same challenges: the need to strengthen youth capacities in terms of knowledge and competences to better interact with institutional counterparts, to build alliances and to better use human-right tools and mechanisms.

The challenges and opportunities coming from the recognition of the role of youth as agents for peace were perspicuous, recognising, as a result, the role of young people in peace and democratic processes in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The 2018 Lisbon Forum acknowledged the importance for providing spaces and prospects for youth to unfold their potential was underlined in order to give continuity and sustainability to the process on youth, peace and security prompted in this Forum.



Bearing this in mind, a call for proposals for youth-led initiatives (seed funding) was launched in the second quarter of 2019, in the framework of the Joint Programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe ["Ensuring sustainable democratic governance and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean"](#) (South Programme III).

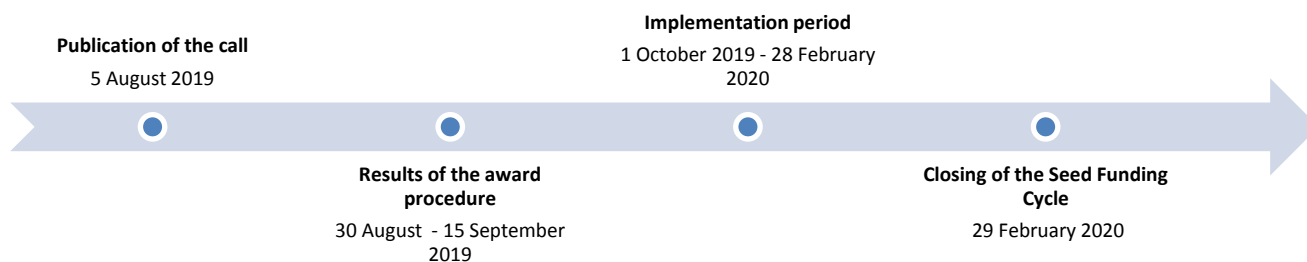
The seed funding grants funded three regional and local youth-led projects designed to implement the [key findings and recommendations of the 2018 Lisbon Forum](#) by either youth-led organisations whose work is focused on youth, peace and security or those who wished to develop this topic.

These organisations promoted youth engagement in peace, security and democratic processes in the Euro-Mediterranean region and recognized the role of young people in democratic promotion, social cohesion, peace building – all elements within the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda.

² Representatives from governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations

TIMELINE

The seed funding process went as follows:



ORGANISATIONS & PROJECTS

Organisation	MAAT Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights, Egypt	Youth Empowerment Society (YES), Morocco	Associazione Internazionale per la Cooperazione e l'Educazione nel Mondo (AICEM) - field office Palestine
What they do	Disseminates, promotes and consolidates a culture of peace, democracy and human rights, renounces violence and the fight against crime and corruption	Consolidate the principles of democracy, Women's Empowerment and spreads a culture of dialogue	Empowers children and young people to support them in actively realizing the change they want to implement in their community by providing high quality and integrated educational methodologies, models, tools and actions.
Project title	<i>Promoting the role of youth in peace and security in the Southern Mediterranean</i>	<i>Get Heard Plus</i>	<i>From Witness to Actor: capacity building path to change the narrative about youth, with a specific focus on their contribution to youth, peace and security</i>



The projects contributed to the implementation of the key findings of the 2018 Lisbon Forum on “youth, peace and security” and the role of young people in democratic promotion, social cohesion, peace building. They:



The seed funding scheme increased the implementing organisations expertise on youth, peace and security and that of the beneficiaries of their actions from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine* and Tunisia, as it:

- gave them the chance to gain vast expertise and knowledge on YPS;
- trained staff members and peers on the YPS agenda, with the support of experts on the topic;
- enabled the exchange of experiences, good practices and networking between them;
- advocated regional cooperation through the expansion or creation of networks;
- endorsed dialogue with experts and local and international organisations concerned about or working on YPS;
- raised their capacities to contribute efficiently and effectively to peace-building processes;
- increased the number and visibility of peace-building grassroots initiatives in the region;
- facilitated their participation in other fora related to the topic, recognising the role which they play in promoting and building peace, taking into account the contexts in the countries;
- stimulated dialogue between youth and youth-led organisations and decision makers;
- supported peer learning and cooperation at local and regional level;
- furnished insights on gender mainstreaming and the promotion of good governance;
- allowed them to integrate gender equality perspectives in their current and future projects;
- provided them with tools, such as educational materials, on YPS, from the UN, Council of Europe, youth-led organisations such as UNOY, and many others;
- safeguarded the respect for human rights, rule of law, and enhanced democratic governance in accordance with the above-mentioned international standards;
- reinforced and enlarged the Council of Europe’s regional action in the Southern Mediterranean region:
 - enhanced knowledge on the democratic principle and the rule of law from a youth perspective;
 - promoted intercultural dialogue between Southern Mediterranean countries and its youth from different backgrounds.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECTS

MAAT

Target group	Youth aged between 18-35 from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco
Objectives	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) improve the capacity of a group of youth to contribute to implement UN Security Council resolution 2250; ii) share more information and different experience at the regional level through networking between youth and stakeholders; iii) increase the number of peace-building grass-roots initiatives in four targeted countries; iv) enhance the involvement of a youth in decision-making process by interactive with executive bodies in their home countries.
Type of action	Youth forum with three discussion sessions, two seminars, two roundtables and six workshops
Youth contributors	17 Young people (12 participants, 2 trainers, 2 staff and one volunteer) contributed to the project.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raised awareness of 12 young people about UNSCR 2250 and the UN strategy to combat terrorism, which makes them contribute positively to peace and security; • a joint document on "Peacebuilding Mechanisms from the perspective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was developed with a focus on youth contributions; • improved the capacities of 12 young people to engage with decision-making processes in their local communities; • development of alternative policy drafts, tackling different issues related to the YPS agenda, in the four countries; • changed the narrative of 12 young people about youth contribution to peace and security in a positive manner; • implemented nine youth initiatives (seven of them grass-roots) which promote peace and social cohesion; • strengthened cooperation and networking between civil society organizations in the four targeted countries; • reached 297 youth in the region and engaged them in the project's scheme indirectly, having reached some vulnerable and rural areas in those countries; • enhanced networking and cooperation between youth organizations, stakeholders and youth in the region through an electronic platform "Peace Makers Forum", which includes around 730 young people of different nationalities.
Council of Europe expertise and tools used	<p>Core values of the Council of Europe; expert Paper “The Council of Europe against online hate speech: conundrums and challenges”; Interactive book “WE CAN! Taking Action against Hate Speech through Counter and Alternative Narratives”; Leaflet “Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the southern Mediterranean: South Programme III”; The report of the 2018 Lisbon Forum: “Youth, Peace and Security: uplifting Youth engagement in peace and democratic processes in the Euro-Mediterranean region”; “Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the decision-making process”; “Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life “Have Your Say!” Videos: No Hate Speech; 20th UYD; Inside the Council of Europe.</p>
Full report	https://rm.coe.int/maat-narrative-report/16809d5c7f

AICEM

Target group	<p>i) Direct target group: 2 youth workers operating in Nablus and 30 young people under the age of 35 living in Nablus participating in a capacity-building path for increasing their engagement in society with a specific focus on peace, human rights and security; ii) Indirect target group: 300 young people under the age of 35 living around Nablus and in the marginalized neighbourhood and the youth organization working in Palestine* itself.</p>
Objectives	<p>To:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) create a structured education format for young people to be active and autonomous that can be replicated; ii) train 2 youth workers operating at local level to implement the educational format to youth leaders/multipliers; iii) increase cooperation at local and national level between stakeholders and youth on HRE, youth engagement and peace by sending 2 youth workers to 2 international events on the topics, gaining operational tools for coordinating local activities; iv) empower 30 young people with tools and capacities to create concrete actions at local level to advocate for their rights to participate, understand and promote/protect HR and take the responsibility of contributing to building a more peaceful and secure society; v) realize 15 concrete actions at local level involving 300 young people in total; vi) realize an action plan ideated and lead by young people for 2020 to increase the number and type of grass-roots activities in Nablus to reach more marginalized youth; vii) implement a communication campaign done by 30 youth involved directly to improve the recognition of civil society initiatives for promoting and building peace
Type of action	Training course
Youth contributors	3 youth workers and 30 young people from Nablus. Indirectly the project involved around 20 000 people. Among those, almost 280 people physically involved thanks to the local actions done by the 30 participants.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • created an educational format to engage young people in advocacy action from YPS that we can improve and replicate several times in the next months; • trained 3 youth workers/trainers of the organisation; • trained 30 new young people becoming new volunteers of the organisation; • involved the 20 young people discarded by the selection procedures including them in the multiplying activities done at local level; • reached around 250 people plus 20 volunteers already working within the organisation through the activities realised; • online and off line campaign reaching more than 20 000 people in around Nablus; • organized 3 meetings with local authorities (Council of youth and sport department in Jericho and the Municipality of Nablus), one local decision maker (a local entrepreneur founder of local NGOs) and stakeholders (university professor and health authority).
Council of Europe expertise and tools used	Core values of the Council of Europe; Council of Europe European Convention on Human Rights ; Manuals used to promote human rights Education such as Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People
Full report	https://rm.coe.int/aicem-narrative-report/16809d5c80

YES

Target group	Moroccan girls aged between 18 to 30 Years from Casablanca, Fez, Al Hoceima
Objectives	To: i) learn the basics of women's rights advocacy; ii) identify the international laws and conventions such as SIDA convention and Istanbul Convention that is related to the subject. iii) learn how to use media tools to defend women's rights.
Type of action	Three awareness raising campaigns, three training sessions and production of podcasts
Youth contributors	10 Young people between 19 and 32 (7 participants, 3 volunteers) contributed to the project.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participants shared their experiences with sexual harassment and shared their dreams and aspirations to live in safety and peace with providing their recommendations for the role of the democratic process in peacebuilding; • participants shared their desire to overcome the difficult conditions that some of them face in their regions; • raised awareness among female students of the seriousness of the phenomenon of violence and harassment and the need to report assault and introduce them to the laws that protect them; • taught female students the basics of storytelling using audio podcasts and video; • produced 15 videos and podcasts "women stories" by the participants; • spread awareness through creating an interactive discussion about the problem on social networking sites.
Council of Europe expertise and tools used	Core values of the council of Europe; Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul convention)
Full report	https://rm.coe.int/yes-narrative-report/16809d5c7b

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member States on this issue.