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A NARRATIVE REPORT ON THE NATIONAL
YOUTH FORUM FOR PEACE CAMEROON

PROMOTING YOUTH ADVOCACY AND REDUCING YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN CAMEROON

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NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM FOR
PEACE CAMEROON



OCTOBER

20
23

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PREPARED BY
MDDT CAMEROON SECRETARIAT



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**MDDT Cameroon –
National Endowment
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THANK YOU



BARRISTER AKONTEH CLIFFORD NIBA
NATIONAL COORDINATOR MDDT CAMEROON
MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOW 2018

“The Boat is Sinking, Africa is sinking, Central Africa is drowning, and Cameroon is losing its fame as a peaceful nation. What are you doing about it?”

THANK YOU MESSAGE

The National Youth Forum for Peace is our recent contribution to echo the urgent need for peace leaving no Cameroonian youth behind in the peace process. It is our responsibility as young leaders to remain resilient and proactive in construing a nation free from insecurity and recruitment of children and youths into armed groups in the NW, SW and Northern Regions of Cameroon.

It is on this note that on behalf of The Movement for Democracy, Development and Transparency (MDDT) Cameroon, I write to immensely thank the organizing CSO partners: Mme Aehshatou Manu, Mr. Ateki Carlson of NewSeta, Mme Nancy Saibou of ADE, Mr. Achaleke Christian of Local Youth Corner, Mme Stella Eteki Dobgima of CEYOFÉ, Mr. Jean Afesi Marc Mbafor of Make Bamenda and Buea Great Again, Mme Ines Tchakounte of YALDA Cameroon, Mrs Nfor Victorine Ambe of CES, Mr. Daliwa Joseph of Mandela Washington Fellows Cameroon, and Mme Balkisou Buba of IPSD Cameroon. Not forgetting the MDDT Cameroon project team and volunteers from partner organization.

We had awesome material and technical support from UNDP, UNICEF, the United States Embassy, The Canadian High Commission, and of course the commitment of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education. Your presence was great motivation to continue to seek ways to discard youth radicalization in conflict infested regions and we count on your continuous support.

It was also a great sacrifice of 500 young leaders from across the ten (10) regions of Cameroon to commit to driving change not only in their communities but along influencing policy changes in Youth Peace and Security with focus on youth radicalization. It will be our pleasure to have all stakeholders accompany us in the process of influencing policy through the recommendations of the young leaders in Cameroon herein attached. Let us join minds, hearts and our hands to reconstitute peace in the conflict regions of Cameroon.



It was also a great sacrifice of 500 young leaders from across the teen (10) regions of Cameroon

SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In view of the ongoing Conflicts in North West, South West and Northern Regions of Cameroon, and considering the aggravating radicalization of youths resulting in Youth Recruitment into armed groups, thousands of deaths, gross human rights violations, insecurity and hardship on civilians. The World Report 2022 demonstrates that the crisis in the Anglophone regions continue to be unabated with over 712,000 people internally displaced in the Anglophone regions and in the Francophone Littoral, West, and Centre regions as of August 2021, and at least 2.2 million people needed humanitarian aid. While in the Extreme North the Islamist armed group Boko Haram increased attacks from January to April, killing at least 80 civilians, with over 340,000 internally displaced as of August 2021.

It is in this vain that The Movement for Democracy, Development and Transparency (MDDT) Cameroon, a human rights, democracy and peace-building focused NG), in collaboration with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a non-profit organization based in the United States that supports democratic initiatives around the world, on an ongoing project “Promoting Youth Advocacy and Reducing Youth Radicalization in Cameroon”, partnered with the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education, and eight Vibrant CSOs and CSO leaders to organize “A National Youth Forum for Peace” in a bid to create safe spaces to promote youth advocacy and reduce youth radicalization in Cameroon. MDDT and NED is Joining Forces with MINJEC and Nine other CSO'S to Empower Cameroonian Youth and



Combat Radicalization. The project was especially amplified by UNDP and MINJEC.

Barrister Akonteh Clifford Niba, the executive director of MDDT Cameroon in Championing this initiative created a coalition with 8 vibrant and seasoned leading Young CSO Leaders and Youth CSOs: Mme Aehshatou Manu, Mr. Ateki Carlson of NewSeta, Mme Nancy Saibou of ADE, Mr. Achaleke Christian of Local Youth Corner, Mme Stella Eteki Dobgima of CEYOFE, Mr. Jean Afesi Marc Mbafor of Make Bamenda and Buea Great Again, Mme Ines Tchakounte of YALDA Cameroon, Mrs Nfor Victorine Ambe of CES, Mr. Daliwa Joseph of Mandela Washington Fellows Cameroon, and Mme Balkisou Buba of IPSD Cameroon.

The National Youth Forum for Peace (NYFP) held from 27th – 28th September 2023 at Palais de Congres Yaounde. At least 500 young advocates from the 10 regions of Cameroon converged to discuss reasons why youths are being radicalized, Challenges faced by youth leaders to denounce and eradicate youth radicalization and violence, expose youth leaders to modern strategic advocacy tools and to develop a recommendation paper for the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education and the State of Cameroon on possible Measures to Reduce youth radicalization in Conflict regions in Cameroon. This initiative identified and trained 100 youth leaders during a comprehensive two-day advocacy training program furnishing them with toolkits as a mentoring tool for security and safe

advocacy programming.

The NYFP further recorded the participation of Local Youth Champions and Young Peace Crusaders from Local communities such as Mamfe, Kumba, Tombel, Muyuka and Muea in the South West Regions, and Mendakwe, Bafut, Bali, and Wum in the North West Region. These youths were enlightened on the role of youths in policymaking, advocacy strategies, combatting hate speech and opportunities for youths through Panel discussions and Keynote addresses by the United States Embassy, the Canadian High Commission, Representatives of MINAT and MINJEC, and Inter-governmental Agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF.

Amongst the Young leaders at the NYFP recommended for: Continues inclusive and genuine dialogue; Continuous and Inclusive Dialogue with Primary Actors and Stakeholders; A Cease Fire by Armed groups and Practical Steps towards dialogue; A National Ministerial and Intergenerational Dialogue platform for Peace; Community Driven Actions for Peace and Social Cohesion; The Rule of Law and Human Rights Literacy Programs for Military officers; Effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and Re-integration of Ex-Fighters and Ex-convicts; Effective Implementation of the Reconstruction Program in the Conflict Regions; Youth Inclusion in Decision Making Positions/arenas; Active Youth participation and engagement in Political and Civic Spaces.



PANELIST DISCUSSION





MDDT TEAM & SUPPORT

WORK SESSION



CITY
YAOUNDE

HOST
MDDT & Partners

THE NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM FOR PEACE (NYFP) HELD FROM 27TH - 28TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT PALAIS DE CONGRES YAOUNDE.

PROJECT PARTNERS



MR. ATEKI CARLSON



MR. ACHALEKE CHRISTIAN



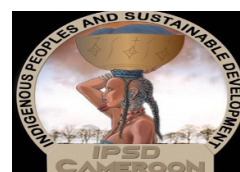
MME STELLA ETEKI DOBGIMA



MME. NANCY SAIBOU



MR. JEAN AFESI MARC MBAFOR



MRS BALKISOU BUBA



MME. INES TCHAKOUNTE



MRS NFOR VICTORINE AMBE



MME. AESHATOU MANU

This project is a component of an MDDT Cameroon – National Endowment for Democracy, USA partnership on “Promoting Youth Advocacy and Reducing Youth Radicalization in Cameroon”. One of the expected project deliverables was to organize a National Youth Forum for Peace (NYFP) in partnership with at least four (04) youth CSOs. MDDT however created partnerships with eight (08) CSOs and Young Activists: Mr. Ateki Carlson of NewSeta, Mme Nancy Saibou of ADE, Mr. Achaleke Christian of Local Youth Corner, Mme Stella Eteki Dobgima of CEYOFÉ, Mme Aeshatou Manu, Mr. Jean Afesi Marc Mbafor of Make Bamenda and Buea Great Again, Mme Ines Tchakounte of YALDA Cameroon, Mme Nfor Victorine Ambe of CES, Mr. Daliwa Joseph of Mandela Washington Fellows Cameroon, and Mme Balkisou Buba of IPSD Cameroon.

This coalition of leaders resolved to amplify the vision of the NYFP by securing further partnerships with The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, who endorsed the NYFP integrating it into the Ministry’s Program for the Celebration of the 42nd

Anniversary of the International Day for Peace 2023. The ministry did an immense contribution of technical experts for panel discussions, facilitated all administrative procedures and secured the smooth implementation of the NYFP.

The coalition further approached the Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Cameroon for added value to the NYFP. In this regard UNDP supported the NYFP with 500 tee-shirts, banners, and twenty-five (25) media outlets. UNICEF also provided technical assistance on a panel discussion on combatting hate speech.

Finally, the United States Embassy, Yaounde Cameroon, and the Canadian High Commission provided human resource assistance with keynote addresses and panelists to equip the youth leaders with modern advocacy tools and leverage available opportunities for capacity building and training programs to amplify their works.



SYMPOSIUM PANEL DISCUSSIONS

IMPLEMENTED NYFP PROJECT ACTIVITIES



2.0 PRE-PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

2.1 Activity Objective: To Build a Coalition for the organization of the NYFP.

MDDT Cameroon and the collaborating CSOs held several planning meetings both physical and online. The CSO Partners included Mr. Ateki Carlson of NewSeta, Mme Nancy Saibou of ADE, Mr. Achaleke Christian of Local Youth Corner, Mme Stella Eteki Dobgima of CEYOFE, Mme Aehshatou Manu, Mr. Jean Afesi Marc Mbafor of Make Bamenda and Buea Great Again, Mme Ines Tchakounte of Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development for Africa (YALDA) Cameroon, Mme Nfor Victorine Ambe of Cornerstone Enrichment Service (CES), Mr. Daliwa Joseph of Mandela Washington Fellows Cameroon, and Mme Balkisou Buba of IPSD Cameroon.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by partners and a standard operating procedure paper produced for partners. An action plan was further developed as a tracking document for projected deliverable.

Again, three (03) preparatory meetings were held with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education to ascertain the effective implementation of the two (02) day NYFP.

2.2 Activity Objective 2: To Selection of Participants for the Symposium.

The project team developed an online application platform for application. Applicants were to demonstrate their peace innovation in their communities and the best 500 were selected out

of 1000 applicants. The best 100 were selected for training on Modern Advocacy Strategies in times of Conflict and how to influence policy as youth leaders.

The Selection team further took into consideration gender and the challenges of youth activists in hotspots with limited communication network. The team therefore did a direct selection of 50 participants from hotspots (NW, SW, and the Far North) with visible works on peace. The team further identified 10 Young Peace Crusaders Living with Disabilities to ensure inclusive participation and contribution.

2.3 Activity Objective 3: To Produce Conference and Visibility Material

MDDT Cameroon with NED funding to produce conference material, rollups, banners, badges, backdrops, tee-shirts and caps for participants. UNDP produced 500 additional tee-shirts for participants on day 2 of the NYFP. The project designed and disseminated symposium posters on social media platforms.



MDDT CAMEROON

ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM FOR PEACE



3.1 Activity Objective 4: To Train 100 Youth Leaders from Hotspots in NW, SW and Northern Regions.

100 selected trainees from the 10 Regions of Cameroon converged at Palais de Congres, Yaounde for 2 days from 27th to 28th September 2023. Through Keynotes and Panel discussions with experts from MINJEC, the U.S Embassy Yaounde, AU Youth Envoy for Youth Peace and Security Central Africa, the Canadian High Commission, UNDP, UNICEF and seasoned CSO activists in a bid to improve on trainee's advocacy skills and capacity to influence national policies on dis-engaging communities from youth radicalization. Succinct keynote presentations were delivered by Mme Wantong Charlene Djiani, Public Engagement Specialist at the U.S Embassy, and Mr. Achaleke Christian on

Panel 1: Youths as Policy Makers in Peace-building

This Panel was composed of Mr. Biloa representative of the President of the Youth Peace and Security Commission at MINJEC, Madam Dontsop Adeline; Mr. Fabrice Lena, CEO and founder of People's Foundation; Mr. Anchang Paul, the National Focal Point for Humanitarian Assistance, MINAT. This session was moderated by Mme Nancy Saiboh. During this session Participants were drilled on the meaning of policy making, related policy making institutions and the various categories of policy influencers. They were exposed to the tools and various ways in which Youth Leaders and Youth CSOs can influence policy at various levels. Special focus was on how youths could partake in peace-building decision-making processes giving practical examples and experiences to demonstrate.



Panel 2: Engaging Youth Leaders in Innovative Advocacy Strategies

This Panel was composed of: Mr. Marcus Davies, the Political Counsellor, Canadian High Commission; Mr Ateki Seta, the Executive Director at Newseta, NED and STANFORD Fellow, and Mrs. Eteki Stella Executive Director of CEYOFÉ and Director of the Women's Empowerment Centre SW Region.

During this session participants were educated on what advocacy is, its purpose, relevance, and the various forms of advocacy. They were schooled on the ethics and principles guiding advocacy. They should know the modern tools of driving advocacy especially in challenging times of Conflict. Panelists utilized practical examples to demonstrate successful advocacy campaigns at various levels; local, national and international.

3.2 Activity Objective 5: To Develop a Recommendation Paper on Reducing Youth Radicalization in Cameroon

Coordinated by Mme Nfor Victorine, DDR Expert and CEO of CES and Mme Buba Balkisou, CEO of IPDS and Social worker, delegates were split into 10 groups to list causes of youth radicalization, challenges faced by youth leaders in combatting youth radicalization and develop recommendations to reduce youth radicalization in Conflict Regions. (See Annex 1 of this report on Recommendations).

This recommendation Paper was developed and presented to MINJEC, CSOs and Stakeholders, during next day session with 500 young leaders.

3.3 Activity Objective 6: To Sensitize 500 Youth Leaders from the 10 Regions of Cameroon on Modern Advocacy Strategies in Times of Conflict.

Coming by way of Keynotes and Panel Discussions, 500 youth leaders were sensitized on the ills of youth radicalization and the urgency for youth

leaders to take positive action towards eradicating this ill. Keynotes in this regard were presented by Mr. Achaleke Christian, African Union Youth Envoy for Peace and Security in Central Africa, Mme Viban Gladys, former Cultural Affairs Specialist at the U.S Embassy Yaounde and gender expert, Mme Fadimatou Iyawa, President of the National Youth Council and the Adviser n0 2 at MINJEC, Mr. Awah Paschal Kum representing the Minister H.E Monouna Foutsou.

Panel 1: Multilateral Cooperation and Opportunities for the Cameroonian Youth

This panel consisted of: the representative of the Resident Representative of UNDP, Mme Ginette Camara, the representatives of the U.S Embassy, Yaounde, Mme Wantong Charlene and Mme Nowou Mbouche Olivia, and Mr. Epah Nyukechen, Program Assistant at Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Representative of UNICEF Mme Valentine Oloume Beyeme. This session was moderated by Mme Nancy Saiboh.

Participants at the end of the session understood the meaning of Multilateral Cooperation and its relevance to peace-building. Panelists demonstrated success stories of how this has created impact over time. Most importantly participants should be exposed to opportunities and resources available to amplify their initiatives and drive impact in their communities.

Panel 2: The role of the youth in silencing hate speech and youth radicalization in Cameroon

Youth Leaders and Stakeholders understand the meaning of hate speech, youth radicalization and their role in diluting these vices.

Participation are exposed to modern initiatives, youth friendly initiatives and best practices over time. They should understand how using culture, music, sports can create safe spaces for advocacy in conflict regions.

SYMPOSIUM



Impressions 856



Impressions 820

Engagements 248 Detail expands 79



mdd_transparency



16 Posts 110 Followers 79 Following

The Movement for Development, Democracy & Transparency
Empowering citizens for sustainable growth & action through democracy & transparency. Protecting civic rights, building peace & combatting extremism.

Facebook profile and 2 other links

Professional dashboard
9.3K accounts reached in the last 30 days.

Posted on September 19 at 4:46 AM



Overview

Reach	8,811
Content Interactions	107
Profile activity	103



Friday, September 29, 2023 at 8:45 AM



COMMUNICATION AND SENSITIZATION

Twitter: @mddtcameroon | Facebook: @mddt Cameroon | Facebook: @Let Dialogue Lead Instagram: @mdd_transparency| LinkedIn: @The Movement for Democracy, Development & Transparency | Tik Tok: @Mddt Projects

This project maximized traditional media and social media platforms to sensitize the public on the ills of youth radicalization and the urgent need for youths to act.

The project utilized CRTV programs to raise awareness not only of the symposium but to sensitize the public on modern tools of advocacy and innovative strategies to dilute youth violence and recruitment into armed group. UNDP Cameroon office supported the symposium with 25 media outlets to amplify the echoes of "Stop Youth Radicalization" by the National Youth Forum for Peace.

MDDT further utilized Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn to sensitize the public on the ills of youth radicalization.

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CHALLENGES FACED AND CONCLUSION

IN THE COURSE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS
EVENT THE PROJECT TEAM FACED A NUMBER OF
CHALLENGES:

● LIMITED FINANCES & INSECURITY

- **Limited Finances:** This project anticipated a total of 1,000 youths with at least 400 from local communities and hotspots for a 4-day symposium, with trainings, intergenerational dialogue phase and session with ministers and diplomatic missions. Unfortunately, the finances were limited to pursue these objectives. However, MDDT Cameroon streamlined activities and cost to host a great forum with 500 young leaders.
- **Insecurity:** The week of the 27th – 28th fell within the week of agencies being threatened by separatist groups and an imposed ghost town. It made it difficult or impossible for some participants to travel from villages in the NW and SW regions. However, MDDT Cameroon stretched out to have most participants travel week end before the event, making the project costlier.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the challenges faced MDDT Cameroon with NED Funding and support from 8 aforementioned CSOs, MINJEC, UNDP, UNICEP, U.S Embassy and the Canadian High Commission, successfully delivered on the National Youth Forum for Peace with expected output and outcomes.

Next on the Annexure page is a summary recommendation paper developed during this Forum and a major tool to amplify youth voices, indirectly engaging youths in the peace process and in having a voice in improving policies around youth violence and radicalization fundamental to them.

YOUTH ACTION AGENDA ON REDUCING YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN THE CONFLICT INFESTED REGIONS OF CAMEROON

PREAMBLE

We, young people from the ten regions of Cameroon working through Civil Society Organisations to promote peace and reduce youth radicalisation, meet in Yaoundé from the 27th -28th of September 2023, in the objective to strengthen our capacities, network and dialogue with government officials, experts and front-line practitioners; do present our aspirations through this action agenda, on how the Government, International organizations, Civil Society Organisations, in Cameroon can promote youth participation in peace building and reducing radicalisation.

We draw from the current state of affairs in Cameroon where there is a marked increase in acts of violence and youth radicalisation into activities in the North West, South West and Northern Regions; We uphold the constant resolve of the State of Cameroon to create a safe space for young people to become ambassadors of peace through moral, civic and entrepreneurial rearmament; Recognise the challenges faced by Government, frontline practitioners and young people in Cameroon in developing and implementing effective and impact-based initiatives for peace in Cameroon;

Draw from the UN Security Council Resolutions 2250, 2419, 2535 on youth, peace and security; AU Agenda 2063 on "The Africa We Want" and promoting a Peaceful, Integrated and Prosperous Africa, the AU Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and the aspirations of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education through the National Commission for Youth, Peace and Security, which upholds the important role of young people in peace building and call for stakeholders to support and work with young people as key partners;

Hereby, with this Action Agenda, reaffirm our strong will and unrelenting commitment to be partners and actors in promoting peace and reducing radicalisation in Cameroon.

This document was developed by youths and is the outcome of an open consultation process with frontline practitioners, experts to ensure an inclusive and integrated approach towards building peace and preventing radicalisation in Cameroon.

Whereof, we, Call on the Government, International Organisations, Civil Society, Media, Entrepreneurs, Religious and traditional rulers to support and

collaborate with us young people to promote peace and take constructive actions towards reducing youth radicalization in Cameroon.

Reacting to the challenges we have identified as a deterrent to peace in Cameroon, we present the following recommendations which will provide solutions to these challenges and amplify our actions;

Recommendations

A. State Actors

- i. Continuous and Inclusive Dialogue with Primary Actors and Stakeholders
- ii. A Yearly National Ministerial and Intergenerational Dialogue platform for Peace
- iii. The Rule of Law, Human Rights and Civilian Protection Literacy Programming for Military officers
- iv. Arigorous pursuit for an effective implementation of disarmament, demobilization and Re-integration of Ex-Fighters and Ex-convicts
- v. A speedy and effective Implementation of the Reconstruction Program in the Conflict Regions
- vi. Youth Inclusion in Decision Making Positions/ arenas
- vii. Investment in Vocational Training, Youth Entrepreneurship and Youth Volunteer Programing with private investors.
- viii. A Practical and Contemporary Curriculum for Peace across all educational levels.
- ix. Speedy Production of National Identity Card.
- x. A National Civic Programing for Youth Political and Electoral Participation.

B. Non-State Actors and Social Workers

- i. A Cease Fire by Armed groups and Practical Steps towards dialogue
- ii. A harmonized Action for Peace by youth CSOs
- iii. The urgent need to consolidate a united front and Voice to curb fragmentation and division amongst separatist groups, Federalist Groups and Southern Cameroon groups and foster efforts for possible dialogue.
- iv. Community Driven Actions for Peace and Social Cohesion.
- v. Religious Peace Initiatives and Advocacy
- vi. Active Youth participation and engagement in Political and Civic Spaces

C. The International Communities

- i. To Prioritize Support Programming for youth initiatives for peace and civic participation.
- ii. Create an enabling environment for a peaceful dialogue among conflicting parties
- iii. Improve efforts towards reducing trans-national crimes affecting conflict regions in Cameroon.

Conclusion

While we applaud the efforts of government, diplomatic missions, inter-governmental and international NGOs, CSOs, traditional and religious leaders towards consolidating peace in Cameroon. However, the recommendations represent voices of the Cameroon Youth, urging stakeholders to take more realistic, inclusive, constructive and practical steps towards salvaging the Cameroonian youth drowning in face of conflict as perpetrators and victims in a bid to harness this burgeoning 75% youth potential in towards





**NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM FOR
PEACE CAMEROON**

