

# LOCAL YOUTH CORNER CAMEROON



## ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

# 2018

## **Introduction**

In 2018, Local Youth Corner Cameroon through its activities reached out to over 70,000 young people across 50 communities in the 10 Regions of Cameroon. This outreach involved 3 major projects within the framework of LOYOC's Peace building, Hate Speech, P/CVE, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program. The communities were impacted through peer to peer education facilitated by our training of trainers' workshops, media programs, publications, and pass it on activities of trainees.

Furthermore, LOYOC prioritized the needs of youths with a history of or propensity to violence by building the capacities of other youth activists on effective rehabilitation and reintegration of violent offenders in various communities. Through its major projects for 2018, LOYOC strengthened the youth-government collaboration in building sustainable peace, which led to the development of an Action Agenda, policy recommendations, and the engagement of a National Rehabilitation and Reintegration Networks (NRRN) created in 2017.

Besides Peace building and Preventing/Countering violent extremism, LOYOC also involved in other capacity building training programs such as education, gender, governance and democracy.

## **OVERVIEW OF LOYOC'S WORK DURING THE YEAR 2017**

- ❖ From January to March, LOYOC engaged in popularising knowledge on Rehabilitation and Reintegration in all the 10 regions of Cameroon and in Localisation of the Youth Positive Practice Memoire on Rehabilitation and Reintegration in the Local communities in Cameroon.
- ❖ From February to June, LOYOC organised the Creative Skills for peace sports tournament which was a 2 month sports tournament in 4 disciplines played in 8 prisons of Cameroon as a means of providing the young violent offenders with an alternative to violence, fostering social cohesion, team spirit and discipline.
- ❖ Throughout the year of 2018, LOYOC engaged in a Training of Trainers Rehabilitation and Reintegration program, the Creative Skills for Peace project that involved raining 300 young violent offenders into Ambassadors of Peace thorough vocational training, Sports, Education and community engagement.
- ❖ From March to August 2018, LOYOC created 8 libraries in 8 prison and Correctional

facilities in Cameroon to foster Education and Promote inclusion and contributions in Prisons.

- ❖ In October 2018, LOYOC organised a training of trainer’s workshop to empower 20 youth leaders from diverse walks of life as Ambassadors of Peace from Various communities in Cameroon and created the pioneer Coalition involving these Youth, Government, International NGOS, NGOs and stakeholders as actors for Localising UNSCR 2250.
- ❖ In October 2018, LOYOC published a Hate Speech Lexicon that captured all hate speech terms used in Cameroon as propellants to violence and radicalisation ahead of the election that took place in the month of October.
- ❖ In November 2018, LOYOC engaged 30 youth influencers as ambassadors against hate speech and trained these youths from the 4 most conflict affected regions of Cameroon on producing content to provide counter and alternative narratives.
- ❖ In November and December 2018, LOYOC engaged in a youth led, evidenced based research on the Challenges of Cultural Diversity in Cameroon.
- ❖ LOYOC also participated in the celebration of events such as international peace day, International Women’s day, international and national youth day and other important days set aside to spread the message of peace, cultural and religious tolerance.

## **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT**

### ***A) Presentation of the Youth Positive Practice Memoire (YPPM) in selected local communities (December 2017 to March 2018)***

**Location:** Far North, Northwest, Southwest and West Regions

**Timeline:** December 2017 to March 2018

#### **Objectives**

After the launch of the YPPM, it was important to popularize this important working document in some selected communities affected by violent extremism. The objectives were

- ❖ To sensitize these communities on the role of R-R in P/CVE;
- ❖ Advocate for government and community support for R-R;

- ❖ Disseminate the YPPM and the Action Agenda, and to
- ❖ Strengthen the National Rehabilitation and Reintegration Networks (NRRN) in these Regions.



### Major activities

- ❖ Advocacy meetings and presentation of the YPPM and the Action Agenda to prison administrators, traditional authorities, religious authorities and institutions, and local administrators
- ❖ Media campaigns; and

- ❖ Organized workshops to enhance the capacities of the Regional Chapters of the NRRN in these Regions.



**Major outcomes:**

- ❖ YPPM and Action Agenda on R-R was presented to 5 prison authorities, 1 juvenile correctional facility, 3 traditional authorities, 5 religious authorities and institutions, and 5 local administrators
- ❖ Action Plans were drafted for the various Regional Chapters of the NRRN
- ❖ Strategic partnerships with key institutions such as the Peace Department of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Bamenda, women and youth empowerment centers

- ❖ Engagements to support youth actions geared towards R-R from key traditional and religious authorities and institutions

## **B) CREATIVE SKILLS FOR PEACE (CS4P) PROJECT**

**Location:** Bamenda Central Prison, Buea Central Prison, Kumba Principal Prison, Mfou Principal Prison, Mora Principal Prison, Yagoua Principal Prison, Kribi Principal Prison and the Bepanda Juvenile Correction Center

**Timeline:** January 2018 to April 2019

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of 300 violent youth offenders by transforming them into heroes and heroines or “**Prisonpreneurs**”, and using their stories and transformation to inspire their peers around the country to resist radicalization
- ❖ To build the entrepreneurial, vocational, peacebuilding, leadership skills and self-esteem of young people in prisons and correctional facilities
- ❖ To improve on the engagement of government and community institutions in rehabilitation, reintegration and counter violent extremism
- ❖ To build social cohesion, self-esteem, and team building skills of the young people in prisons and correctional facilities
- ❖ To create a network of peace and change agents who were former violent extremist offenders

### **Major activities**

- ❖ 6 weeks intensive entrepreneurship, leadership and peacebuilding training for 300 inmates
- ❖ 6 weeks Sports for Peace tournament in the prisons and correctional facilities to accompany the skills training
- ❖ Shadowing of beneficiaries and funding of best projects
- ❖ Mentoring and marketing of funded ideas
- ❖ Connection with parents and families

### **Major outcomes**

- ❖ 300 inmates in 8 prisons and correctional facilities have been trained in 27 different entrepreneurial skills
- ❖ Young inmates participated for the first time in the Cameroon Youth Entrepreneurship Awards, and the Minister of Youth Affairs for the first time launched National Youth Day activities in prison
- ❖ Created employment for over 10 young entrepreneurs nationally and internationally involved in the supply chain
- ❖ 9 national and 5 international exhibitions for the Prison-preneur products attracting over more than 7000 visitors



**Pic: The various vocational skills taught in the CS4Peace program**

## **B) CREATIVE SKILLS FOR PEACE EDUCATION PROJECT**

**Location:** Bamenda Central Prison, Kumba Principal Prison, Mfou Principal Prison, Yagoua Principal Prison, Mora Principal Prison, Kribi Principal Prison, and Bepanda Juvenile Correction Center

**Timeline:** June to September 2018

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To provide a platform where violent offenders can tell their stories without fear of judgement and condemnation
- ❖ To improve upon the literacy levels of the inmates through reading and writing proficiency exercises
- ❖ To provide access to quality education for violent offenders
- ❖ To facilitate the transition of violent offenders into formal education

### **Major activities**

- ❖ The inter-prison essay competition involving inmates in the juvenile and adult categories. The questions were: ‘The Change I want to make’. What is the one thing you would like to do or change to make your community or country more peaceful? (Adult category), and What does peace mean to you? (Juvenile category)
- ❖ Creation, and equipping of prison libraries through the donation of books
- ❖ Selection of a panel of judges to evaluate the essays of the inmates
- ❖ Ceremony to award prizes to inmates who wrote the best essays in the different categories

### **Major outcomes**

- ❖ 8 new libraries were created and equipped in 8 prison and correctional facilities in 6 regions of Cameroon
- ❖ Over 70 young violent offenders had a recognized voice through their entries at the inter-prison essay competition
- ❖ Young violent offenders were awarded prizes as winners of the prison inter-essay competition which boosted their morale to continue their education while in jail



- ❖ Over 5000 young violent offenders were provided with an alternative to violence through education



CS4Peace Essay winners.

#### **D) EMPOWERING YOUTH LEADERS AS PEER EDUCATORS FOR PEACE: “LOCALIZING UNSCR 2250 IN CAMEROON”**

##### **Objectives**

- ❖ Mobilize and empower 20 young civil society activists from the Extreme North, South West, North West and Center regions of Cameroon to become agents and actors for peace and prevent violent extremism
- ❖ To identify and work with relevant stakeholders including UN agencies, the government, and 20 young leaders involved in the process of peace building.
- ❖ To strengthen the capacity of youths on the UNSCR 2250 and the process of implementation at the local level.
- ❖ Develop a joint youth statement in the quest for the implementation of the UNSCR 2250 in Cameroon.
- ❖ To mobilize development stakeholders to set up a national coalition mechanism that would facilitate the localization, implementation and develop a national action plan for UNSCR 2250

##### **Major activities**

- ❖ 3 – day residential training workshop on human rights, counter and new/alternative narratives against violent extremism, and non-violence
- ❖ Movie night (Beast of no Nation) to enable participants understand some of the adverse impacts of violence in communities
- ❖ Consultations and deliberations on a youth statement and national coalition for implementing UNSCR 2250 in Cameroon
- ❖ Advocacy actions in various communities by the participants

### Major outcomes

- ❖ 20 Youth leaders were trained and empowered as Ambassadors of Peace and actors for the popularization and localization of UNSCR 2250.
- ❖ A coalition for the localization of UNSCR 2250 was created as engaged the stake holders and other actors as Ambassadors of peace who formed the pioneer batch of members of the Coalition for Actors for the Localization of UNSCR 2250 in Cameroon together with the trained youth
- ❖ Presentation of a youth statement containing policy recommendations for the various stakeholders on how to facilitate youth participation in the peace building process
- ❖ Members of the National Coalition continue activities in their respective communities on very important national and international days in Cameroon like National Youth Day.



Youth leaders taking action in the peace process and localizing UNSCR 2250

## **E) CONTEXTUALISING ONLINE HATE SPEECH TERMS IN CAMEROON**

**Location:** Yaoundé

**Timeline:** September to November 2018

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To investigate the landscape of online hate narratives in Cameroon, identify and contextualise language that contribute to violence
- ❖ To understand the dynamics of online hate speech and the connection between online hate speech and offline violent events in Cameroon
- ❖ To address a gap in recent efforts to tackle hate speech and its effect on communities in conflict zones
- ❖ To develop a lexicon that would serve as a resource to inform individuals and organizations involved in monitoring and countering hate speech in Cameroon so that their work can be more effective
- ❖ To raise awareness among Cameroonian social media users, including those in diaspora communities on the need to counter and combat hate speech

### **Main activities**

- ❖ Creation of a lexicon of hate speech terms commonly used on digital media in the Cameroonian context by PeaceTech Lab to provide a qualitative and quantitative analytical foundation that local and international groups can use to more effectively monitor and counter hate speech
- ❖ Organisation of focus group discussions with selected government and civil society actors from all 10 regions of Cameroon to validate the lexicon within the Cameroonian context
- ❖ Conduct in-depth interviews (in person and through the telephone) with persons who through their experiences can better explain the reason for the use of certain prejudicial terms and phrases
- ❖ Editing and publication of the lexicon of hate speech terms

### **Major Outcome**

- ❖ Publication of a report entitled *Social Media and Conflict in Cameroon: A Lexicon of Hate Speech Terms*

This report can be accessed at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54257189e4b0ac0d5fca1566/t/5bf4675f352f536c17b671c4/1545326069349/Cameroon+Lexicon+PeaceTech+Lab>

## **F) Youths Say No to Hate Speech Project: Empowering Youth Influencers against Hate Speech in Cameroon**

**Location:** Center Region, Northwest Region, Southwest Region and Far North Region

**Timeline:** November 2018 to

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To build the capacities of Cameroonian youth influencers and engage them against hate speech online and offline
- ❖ To train 30 youth influencers from different works of life and from four regions of Cameroon to become agents against hate speech
- ❖ To create content that uses counter/alternative narratives and human right education to spread love and prevent hate speech
- ❖ To engage 30 schools in the fight against hate speech by creating 30 No Hate Speech Clubs in the regions concerned
- ❖ To carry-out an evidence-based research highlighting the implications of hate speech in violent conflict and the role of counter narratives in preventing violence and violent extremism in Cameroon

### **Main activities**

- ❖ 3 – day residential training for 30 young media influencers (journalists, bloggers, artists, comedians, movie producers) on hate crime and hate speech, online hate speech and social media, human rights and hate speech, and content development
- ❖ The Spread Love Challenge where participants used their knowledge to develop counter or alternative narratives to hate speech
- ❖ Pass It On activities in various communities of the 4 regions concerned to engage other

youths in countering hate speech

- ❖ 2 TV programmes on national TV to sensitise the public against hate speech
- ❖ Collection of data through questionnaires on the implications of hate speech in violent conflict and the role of counter narratives in preventing/countering violent extremism

### Major outcomes

- ❖ 30 youth influencers were trained on new and alternative narratives to preventing and countering hate speech
- ❖ 30 No Hate Speech Clubs have been created in 30 different secondary schools which has led to over 600 youths being impacted directly
- ❖ A No Hate Speech Song entitled “Hate nobody” by one of the youth influencers in the Spread Love Campaign
- ❖ Publication of a report entitled *Hate Speech and Violent Conflict in Cameroon*

This report can be accessed at <https://www.loyocameroon.org/hate-speech-and-violent-conflict-in-cameroon/>

