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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provided dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

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# **A CRITICAL STUDY ON EMPOWERING YOUTH** **AS AGENTS OF PEACE**

AUTHORED BY - MOHAN KUMAR N.

## **Abstract:**

**Young people are frequently ‘othered’ in discussions about conflict. This is a dangerous practice as youths can play a very positive role aiding peace building in societies recovering from conflict.** They also have multi-faceted roles. Youths can be heroes as well as victims, saviours and courageous in the midst of crisis, as well as criminals in the shantytowns and military entrepreneurs in the war zones. Yet, as a category, youth are often approached as a fixed group or demographic cohort. The positioning of youth in society has a bearing on their leadership potential and their possible role in peace building. The tension between young and old has been one of the key features of inter-generational shifts pertaining to the control over power, resources and people. For much of human social interaction, the category called ‘youth’ has been perceived as a historically constructed social category, a relational concept, and as a group of actors that is far from homogenous. A myriad of factors make childhood and youth highly heterogeneous categories in terms of gender, class, race, ethnicity, political position as well as age. Object of this paper is how youths are playing a vital role for building of peace, what are the actions taken by UNO in connection of youth for peace and how youth can solve the conflicts and establish peace in the universe.

**Key Words:** Youth, Security, Peace, UNO, Security Council, Development.

Youth are among the first victims of radicalization and conflict. Their participation in the prevention and resolution of disputes is therefore essential for the building of sustainable peace. As political leaders closest to a country’s youth, young parliamentarians have a key role in addressing drivers of conflict and contributing to solutions.

Building on [UN Security Council resolution 2250](#) adopted in 2015, which sets out international commitments on youth, peace and security, we work with young parliamentarians to help galvanize their action to prevent violent extremism and contribute to reconciliation and peace building.

One pillar of our activities is to raise awareness and coordinate action through regional and international meetings. For example, in a series of meetings on preventing violent extremism, young parliamentarians committed to enhance legislative and oversight action to strengthen youth engagement in the establishment and implementation of plans of action to prevent violent extremism. This also includes addressing the drivers of extremism, such as lack of socioeconomic opportunities for young people, discrimination and marginalization.

We also brought a parliamentary perspective to broader international efforts to enhance policies for youth, peace and security through the participation of young MPs at United Nations meetings and research. For example, we [contributed to the United Nations progress study for UNSC resolution 2250](#). Informed by extensive interviews with young parliamentarians from around the world, our recommendations included the establishment and reinforcement of linkages between youth and parliament, as well as the use of young parliamentarians as mediators and as promoters of dialogue in divided societies.

Whether in the prevention of violent extremism or conflict resolution, a common theme throughout our work is that for youth to be part of the solution, they need to be effective participants in political fora. Another reason why enhancing youth representation in parliaments is so important. On 9 December 2015, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted [Resolution 2250](#) - it's first-ever resolution on Youth, Peace and Security - thereby recognising the importance of the positive contributions that young people are making for the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. Furthermore, it affirmed the important role that youth need to assume in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and called for the engagement of youth as partners and leaders at all levels of decision-making and peace building processes. Since then, progress studies such as "[The Missing Peace](#)" and the two subsequent resolutions ([UNSCR 2419](#) and [UNSCR 2535](#)), have called for additional measures to increase the influence and participation of youth in peace building processes. Specifically, *The Missing Peace* urges the international community to "invest in the capacities,



agency and leadership of young people”. It has thus become clear that education, training and capacity building of both youth and their counterparts at local, national and regional levels are essential to translate the resolutions on Youth, Peace and Security from the halls of the United Nations to policymakers, actors and change-agents at the ground level.

*The Youth, Peace and Security agenda highlights five pillars for action related to young people's contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution:*

- (1) Participation*
- (2) Protection*
- (3) Prevention*
- (4) Partnership*
- (5) Disengagement and Reintegration<sup>1</sup>*

Over the recent years, UNITAR (United Nations Institute for Training and Research) has consolidated its offer in the thematic area of Youth Empowerment. Recognising the synergies between the SDGs (in particular 4, 5, 7, 10, 16 and 17) and in line with the priorities of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, UNITAR supports youth and youth counterparts by developing capacities of individuals, organisations and institutions to enhance youths’ potential to meet their communities most pressing peacebuilding needs. We are always open to expanding the ways that we can support actors in contributing to the empowerment of young people and have to date supported partners in various capacities, including training and facilitation, training of trainers, advisory and coaching and mentoring, on a constantly expanding range of topics.

### **Contribution of UNESCO for Development of Youth:**

Drawing on existing activities and new proposals, UNESCO is launching a broad new integrated framework of action that is guided by a common objective: to equip young women and men with knowledge, skills and values that empower them to live peaceful, constructive and productive lives, to engage as responsible global citizens and to be resilient to any form of abuse or manipulation, including radicalization and violent extremism. In the context of this new integrated framework,

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. S.K. Kapoor, Public International Law, Lucknow, Central Law Agency, 2021) p.100-102.

UNESCO has recently launched the #Unite4Heritage campaign. At a time when irreplaceable cultural heritage sites and cultural expressions are increasingly under attack seeks to raise awareness, especially among youth, to draw attention to the importance of cultural diversity and strengthening knowledge of world cultures. Empowering youth to actively participate in cultural life and equipping learners to become responsible global citizens is vital to forging more fair, inclusive and peaceful societies. Digital technologies and the Internet, which impact on the way cultural diversity is expressed and perceived, as well as on how young people learn and express themselves, represent an opportunity to respond to the challenge of radicalization, including through safeguarding heritage and global citizenship education. As part of the Unite for Heritage campaign, UNESCO has developed partnerships with arts institutions and youth organizations. In addition, as part of the integrated framework, UNESCO will engage with States in the Arab region with a view to strengthening education in the humanities – notably the teaching and learning of history, geography and the social sciences. Humanities foster essential skills for youth integration, such as critical thinking, research and creativity, as well as openness, tolerance and respect of one's own history and culture, as well as that of others. By equipping young people with such knowledge, skills and values, education can play a critical role in enabling them to expand their choices and be resilient to any form of manipulation and radicalization. The project detailed below is part of this new integrated framework of action by UNESCO.

### **Building Skills, Bolstering Peace:**

This new project is part of the new integrated framework of action by UNESCO to support young people in building new forms of global solidarity, including online, and in resisting and countering radicalization and violent extremism. Working with all its partners, UNESCO also conceives this as part of international efforts<sup>1</sup> to strengthen the positive role of youth engagement in societies across the world. This action will support youth civic engagement and participation in peace building and the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural/interreligious understanding by empowering and mobilizing youth organizations, youth online communities and networks, as well as other relevant stakeholders (policy-makers, researchers, media professionals and social workers). This new component will mobilize the Organization at multiple levels, working through new activities and drawing on existing programmes – undertaken throughout 2015 and until December 2017. The objective is to provide a framework for action that will mobilize

UNESCO at multiple levels to empower young women and men with values, knowledge, capacities and skills to hold exchanges, communicate online and cooperate across social and cultural boundaries, enabling them to become responsible global citizens and mobilizing critical thinking to counter radicalization and online enrolment, including violent extremism.

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Interventions are articulated around four axes:

- Supporting multidisciplinary research on linkages between youth, Internet, radicalization/de-radicalization, as well as research-informed policies and actions;
- Empowering youth online communities and key youth stakeholders on topics relevant to counter-radicalization, by building their competencies and skills and by equipping them with creative tools and knowledge;

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<sup>2</sup> M.P. Tandon, Public International Law, ( Faridabad, Allahabad Law Agency, 2010) p. 320-323.

- Strengthening mobilization and cooperation between media professionals and practitioners to combat radicalization and online hate speech, with a focus on countries suffering tensions and conflict situations;
- Supporting creative media campaigns and outreach strategies targeting policy-makers and opinion-makers as well as the general public (including young audiences). Core actions will be implemented mainly at the national and local levels, with gender sensitivity mainstreamed throughout all activities. © CC by 2.0 AFS-USA Intercultural Programs.

UNESCO will support the consolidation of existing international expertise in order to understand the root causes of radicalization, and extremist violence, including focusing on the effective and evidence-based linkages between youth online/offline behaviours, their use of the Internet, online radicalization as well as the protection of freedom of expression and universal access to information, applying a gender-sensitive approach. In addition, UNESCO will support the establishment of a pool of international experts to assist in clarifying concepts and practices, designing contextualized policies and evaluating the impact of national/local strategies tackling radicalization and online enrolment of young people. UNESCO will support action-oriented research related to de-radicalization and approaches facilitating the social reintegration of youth who have turned to extreme violence. In this regard, the International MIL and Intercultural Dialogue University Network will support global research focused on young people's competencies to deal with intolerance online and offline, their attitude towards radical and extremist content online and ideological content in the media, all while applying a gender-sensitive approach. Moreover, rigorous Media and Information Literacy (MIL) assessments of country readiness and teacher competencies will be conducted. These will serve to assess the levels of understanding of Global Citizenship and identify the gaps and data for concrete interventions to empower youth. This MIL-focused research will contribute to the formulation of Information Society Policy modules based on the National Information Society Policy Templates developed within the framework of UNESCO's intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP). National adaptation of these modules will be conducted through consultations. UNESCO will advocate for shared policy positioning and evidence-based messaging between key regional/international institutions (i.e. UNESCO, UNDP, Anna Lindh Foundation, Council of Europe, etc.) highlighting the positive role of young women and men in countering radicalization and in building lasting peace, while promoting intercultural

dialogue, freedom of expression and universal access to information and knowledge via the Internet. Such coordinated initiatives will help to positively influence national policies on youth and involve a wide range of youth stakeholders. The role of young women and men as key stakeholders in the shaping of national information and knowledge policy strategies and frameworks is not adequately addressed or appreciated neither by youth, policy-makers nor other stakeholders (developers and other actors in the online media and ICT industry). Through IFAP, specific efforts aimed at providing avenues for dialogue and collaboration between youth representatives and other stakeholders involved in the national, regional and global policy debate in the Knowledge Societies space will be advocated. Attention will be given to supporting capacity building of youth across the six strategic priority areas of IFAP (information accessibility, information for development, information ethics, information literacy, information preservation and multilingualism in cyberspace) to empower them to articulate concerns in policy fora and to participate in these processes. Emphasis will be given to the needs of youth in developing countries and within marginalized groups (with specific attention to gender, youth with disabilities, as well as youth in rural and remote areas).

### **Empowering Youth Online Communities:**

Empowering Youth Online Communities and key youth stakeholders on topics of capacity-building online tools, empowering selected community managers as well as young web administrators to become central actors (and key multipliers) in preventing, reporting and responding to online radicalization messages, and allowing self-monitoring and awareness of threats related to violent extremism. The tools will be available in several languages and can be used by a variety of youth organizations and stakeholders. Courses and trainings have already been developed but a more comprehensive approach with a particular focus on young women and men is needed. This should build on existing training and incorporate the latest thinking.<sup>2</sup> The project will include various online youth-friendly Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), “edutainment” (education and entertainment) videos, specific visuals/messaging on social media oriented towards human rights education. Materials will be based on thematic entry points that are relevant to tackling online hate speech and radicalization: media and information literacy, education on cultural diversity and shared cultural heritage, intercultural competencies, global citizenship, peace-building, conflict resolution and critical thinking.

A youth-friendly pedagogical online and face-to-face programme about the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting cultural diversity will be implemented among existing UNESCO youth networks, to promote mutual understanding and a sense of common belonging to universal heritage and values, as well as intercultural dialogue and peace. Of particular relevance will be the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative. Within its framework, five Youth Action Camps will be held for 150 young national and/or international volunteers in five different locations directly related to World Heritage sites worldwide in collaboration with local youth organizations, NGOs and communities<sup>3</sup>.

**Strengthening Mobilization and Cooperation between Media Professionals to combat radicalization and online hate speech, with a focus on countries suffering tensions and conflict situations:**

The Bureau of the IPDC will launch a call for proposals, consider and select the best ones on areas that are closely linked to the issues covered by the UNESCO June Conference and identified for follow up, including: Countering hate speech in media and social media, with a focus on countries in crisis. The media face the risk of becoming, consciously or unconsciously, a vehicle for hate speech. The need for accurate and truthful reporting becomes essential. It also becomes essential to understand the limitations of free media with regards to hate speech, while keeping responses to the problem proportionate and balanced. Promoting best practices, conducting rigorous monitoring and improving professional standards in media coverage are all priority actions in this area. This could include dialogue on self-regulation in media (including social media platforms); as well as targeted youth and social-media campaigns in the framework of capacity building for Media and Information Literacy.

Promoting conflict-sensitive journalism practices, including in journalism schools: In countries affected by conflict and overall insecurity, the media has an important role to play in promoting human rights, peace, dialogue and conflict resolution through the gathering of neutral, non-partisan information. To report reliable and unbiased information to the public, it is essential to have high professional standards and a deep understanding of conflict and conflict-resolution theories and

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<sup>3</sup> R.C. Hingorani, *Modern International Law*, (New Delhi, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co, PVT Ltd, 1993) p.398-399.

practices. Promoting cross-cultural dialogue among journalists. Nearly two-thirds of all conflicts in the world have a cultural component. Unavoidably, the media reflect tensions in society (religion, diversity, migration, etc.) and have a critical role to play in improving citizens' understanding of such sensitive issues, without contributing to polarizing communities or "fanning the flames". Safety of journalists. In light of the increased violent attacks around the world, a series of projects involving young journalists will be identified in strategic countries. In this regard, priority will be given to initiatives that further the objectives of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as well as the application of the UNESCO Journalism Safety Indicators.

This component will facilitate the involvement of young leaders, young ambassadors selected among past participants of the Anna Lindh Foundation's project Young Arab Voices, recipients of ALF's Mediterranean Journalist Awards, trainees of the capacity-building programme developed under this proposed pilot project, as well as other key stakeholders. In order to strengthen this component, workshops helping young women and men to develop skills to communicate through media will also be planned. It should be noted that the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, which will be held in Jordan on 21-22 August 2015, also foresees, as one of its main outcomes, the launch of a global multimedia and communication campaign aimed at highlighting the extraordinary efforts of young people who are shaping their communities constructively despite the violence and risks they face. It would be important to link the two communication campaigns. The abovementioned lines of action will be supported through the production of innovative, interactive and appealing tools, resources and communication materials, led by UNESCO, NET-MED Youth national working groups, the Anna Lindh Foundation and other partners<sup>4</sup>.

## **Beneficiaries**

- Youth networks and online communities;
- young women and men, trained on MIL, the safeguarding of cultural heritage and promotion of cultural diversity, and their positive roles as global citizens and contributors to peace from the identified project countries;

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<sup>4</sup> Rupert Maclean- David N. Wilson, International Handbook of Education for the changing world of work, (London, UNEVOC, 2009), p.345-346.

- Regional media institutions;
- Education stakeholders and policy-makers from countries where radicalization threats are growing
- Young women and men and learners with disabilities from developing countries, trained to develop smart mobile apps, generating pathways for future learning or launching small businesses;
- Practitioners (Civil Society leaders, teachers and policy-makers, youth leaders, media and information professionals, including bloggers) trained on mentorship or facilitation roles for enhancing global citizenship and peace.

## **Overview of Existing UNESCO Initiatives**

### **NET-MED Youth Project:**

This flagship project, funded by the EU and implemented in ten countries along the Eastern and Western basins of the Mediterranean, aims to contribute to providing an enabling environment for young women and men to develop competencies, exercise their rights and engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to political, social, economic, educational and cultural policy planning processes. The project focuses on strengthening youth networks and organizations, national youth strategies and policies, mainstream media and youth skills development. In this framework, UNESCO has commissioned an in-depth assessment of existing youth online platforms and online behaviours in the southern Mediterranean region. Its findings will feed into evidence-based recommendations for the creation and/or consolidation of online platforms offering relevant services, knowledge and opportunities for networking and interaction among youth organizations on youth-related issues, as well as between them and other important actors, such as policy-makers, media professionals, researchers and experts

### **Heritage and Creativity Educational Programmes:**

This flagship project, funded by the EU and implemented in ten countries along the Eastern and Western basins of the Mediterranean, aims to contribute to providing an enabling environment for young women and men to develop competencies, exercise their rights and engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to political, social, economic, educational and cultural policy planning processes. The project focuses on strengthening youth



networks and organizations, national youth strategies and policies, mainstream media and youth skills development. In this framework, UNESCO has commissioned an in-depth assessment of existing youth online platforms and online behaviours in the southern Mediterranean region. Its findings will feed into evidence-based recommendations for the creation and/or consolidation of online platforms offering relevant services, knowledge and opportunities for networking and interaction among youth organizations on youth-related issues, as well as between them and other important actors, such as policy-makers, media professionals, researchers and experts. UNESCO leads the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, to mobilize youth and their organizations in safeguarding cultural heritage and promoting it by way of enhancing their skills in the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, so as to strengthen a shared sense of belonging and ownership. UNESCO has developed online tools to familiarize youth with World Heritage sites, their history, their own culture and that of others through the World Heritage in Young Hands Kit, to foster mutual understanding and to raise their awareness about the importance of cultural diversity and the potential of creativity in the promotion of critical thinking, self-expression and dialogue through the Diversity Kit for Youth.

**The Intergovernmental Information for All Programmes (IFAP):**

Established in 2001, IFAP provides a platform for international policy discussions, cooperation and the development of guidelines for action in the area of access to information and knowledge. The Programme supports Member States to develop and implement national information policy and strategy frameworks in six priority areas of information accessibility, information for development, information ethics, information literacy, information preservation and multilingualism in cyberspace. Access to information and knowledge plays a critical role in development. It enhances human capacities, the overcoming of barriers to participation, the narrowing of inequalities and the strengthening of social cohesion and peace. Through its collaboration with governments, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs and its network of National IFAP Committees and Working Groups, IFAP is well positioned to support capacity-building, projects and policy dialogue for Member States in their efforts to create inclusive, participatory knowledge societies. By leveraging its competencies and networks, IFAP initiated the organization of the International Conference on “Youth and the Internet: Fighting Radicalization and Extremism” to assist Member States in developing solutions to address this important challenge. The IPDC is the

only intergovernmental programme in the UN system mandated to mobilize international support for independent media initiatives in developing countries. It provides a cost-efficient annual mechanism for supporting strategic, innovative and gender-sensitive media development proposals by local organizations worldwide. The IPDC has partnered in hosting the conference on “Youth and the Internet: Fighting Radicalization and Extremism” as part of its contribution to promoting media development for peace. Accordingly, the pilot project will leverage the systems and global networks of the IPDC, to support grass root activities that can counter online extremism targeting youth.

**The Youth Mobile Initiative** aims to directly empower young people, particularly young women, with the technical skills and confidence to develop smart mobile apps to address key demographic issues such as chronic youth unemployment, global citizenship, and sustainable development. With activities in 32 Member States and multi-stakeholder partnerships with Tecnovation (USA), Telephonic Education Digital, Zain, Mozilla and the Forest Whitaker Peace Earth Foundation, the Initiative utilizes very high-quality, multilingual open-licensed training materials and open-source MOOC platforms to train a critical mass of youth to develop multiple platform-independent, locally-relevant, ethical, and accessible apps for dialogue, exchange, global citizenship and peace messaging.

#### **UNESCO’s Work on Media and Information:**

Indispensable in promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue among cultures is a critical understanding of the functions of media, Internet and other information providers, their contribution to combating prejudices and cultural stereotypes as well as to dissolving barriers. Media and information literacy enables youth and other key stakeholders to acquire this critical understanding and necessary skills in order to engage and serve as a catalyst for open and well-informed dialogue. UNESCO is a global leader in promoting MIL, and the Organization’s online training modules and resources in this field (such as the MIL Curriculum for Teachers, MIL Policy and Strategy Guidelines, MIL Assessment Framework, and Guidelines for Broadcasters on Promoting User-Generated Content) will critically contribute to this working proposal.

## **Global Citizenship Education**

To enhance the quality, relevance and delivery of education, UNESCO supports Member States to integrate Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in their education systems. GCED promotes not only basic cognitive skills, but also non-cognitive skills that are important to building more peaceful, just and sustainable societies. It aims at equipping learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that instil respect for human rights, social justice, diversity and gender equality, and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens. GCED is one of the strategic areas of work for UNESCO's Education Programme (2014-2017) and one of the three priorities of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) launched in September 2012. Moreover, it is proposed as a target of the education goal for the future post-2015 development agenda.

### **Conclusion:**

Now a day's youth are playing a very important role in all the activities in the society. A society development is depends on youth. Even international institutions conducted different programmes for youth participation in peace building. Since 2000, the international community has been strengthening its commitment to achieve sustainable, comprehensive, and inclusive peace through women's inclusion and participation. The women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda set forth in [UN Security Council resolution 1325 \(2000\) and seven subsequent resolutions](#), is evidence of the commitment to achieve sustainable, peaceful societies for all by the inclusion and participation of women in all aspects of conflict and post-conflict peace processes. That commitment has expanded to include young people. Several NGOs playing a role for improve the youth activities, through different activities people educated in the entire field. When peoples are educated then we can establish a peace world otherwise it's very difficult to see a universal peace in the world.