



# 1. Executive Summary



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Burundi is young. In 2008, 66% of the total population was under the age of 25<sup>(1)</sup>. With the seventh-highest fertility rate in the world, this percentage of youth (and the overall population) is projected to increase<sup>(2)</sup>. Burundi is also rural, underdeveloped and fragile. The post-election violence of 2015 reversed the meagre developmental gains from the intermittent years of stability and further exacerbated the fragility of the state<sup>(3)</sup>.

Burundi needs to harness the creative potential of its youth to achieve its inherent potential<sup>(4)</sup>. This can be achieved by giving them their deserved place, providing them with spaces for intergenerational dialogue, and lastly, by rethinking education to build their capacity to attain long-lasting peace.

As the country gears up for the 2020 elections, this call by the youth of Burundi is extremely urgent!

With the aim to mainstream the voices of Burundi youth and include them in the policymaking process in the areas of education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship, UNESCO MGIEP, YELI-Burundi (Youth Empowerment and Leadership Initiative-Burundi) and the Government of Burundi organised a series of high-level #TAG<sup>c</sup>Bujumbura dialogues. These were an integral part of the Annual Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) Youth Blast, which was organised by YELI-Burundi on September 16-17, 2019 in Bujumbura, Burundi. H.E Everlyne Butoyi, Minister of Youth, IT and Posts, inaugurated the event.

The theme of the main TAG<sup>c</sup> plenary was *The Place of the Youth and Social and Emotional Learning for the Prevention of Violent Extremism* – within the broader

context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250.

This unique UNESCO MGIEP TAG<sup>c</sup> modality for actionable dialogue comprised the following components – month-long online discussions, live TAG<sup>c</sup> and actionable outputs. The preceding online discussion had over 1,000 participants, and witnessed rich discussion threads being compressed into insightful, actionable ideas. Subsequently, based on the online engagement and the on-ground work done, six representatives were chosen from these participants to represent the collective voices of the youth. They were joined by three distinguished senior decision-makers (from the Government of Burundi and civil society) in a live TAG<sup>c</sup> exchange, where they delved into issues and unearthed creative solutions in front of an audience of over 200.

The dialogues (online and live) resulted in the following key messages and recommendations<sup>1</sup>



## Key Messages

- The youth of Burundi feel that they are the leaders of today and want the government and the wider civil society to empower and support them to affect change.
- Due to unemployment and other challenges such as the lack of quality education, the youth of Burundi feel vulnerable to political manipulation and violent conflicts.
- The youth are calling for a revamp of the education system to prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century work environment and, most importantly, enable them to be critical, empathetic, compassionate and non-violent change-makers who spearhead transformations towards sustainable peace.
- Burundi youth are seeking capacity building on critical media and information literacy skills to enable them to use social media and other digital enablers to create spaces for constructive dialogue and collaboration.

## Key Recommendations<sup>2</sup>

1

Recognise youth as the leaders of today and provide them with avenues to mainstream their collective voice at the highest levels of policymaking. This includes supporting grassroots initiatives and creating political spaces for the youth to participate. For example, ensuring their representation on decision-making committees and supporting youth candidates for local and national political offices.

2

Ensure transparency in employment, including, providing merit-based opportunities to all Burundian youth. Also, build entrepreneurial skills and support youth-led entrepreneurial initiatives. These will provide them with meaning and purpose to desist from violence and political manipulation.

3

Rethink education from instruction for employability to transformation towards peace and sustainability. This includes ensuring that learning is fun, personalised and contextualised; providing in-service training for teachers to stay updated with evolving pedagogies and lastly, empowering a union of educators that includes parents and community leaders.

4

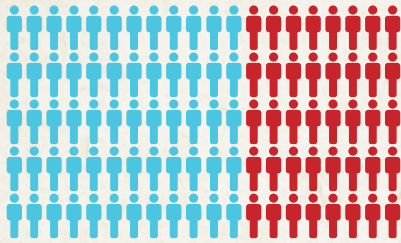
Mainstream Social and Emotional Learning in all facets of the education system. Introducing the pertinent competencies of social and emotional learning to young people at an early age is ideal for sustainable peace in the end.

5

Make inter-generational dialogue a structured component of engagement with the youth and co-organize such dialogues periodically at the local and national levels to bring communities together to find solutions to societal challenges.

The rest of the brief elaborates on the process and detailed, actionable outputs for policy intervention.

## 2. Context and Thematic framing



**42%**

**of the world's  
population is under  
the age of 25**

The world is changing drastically – from unfettered technological advancement, increased accessibility to education, improved democratic spaces and freedom, to exacerbated anthropogenic climate change<sup>(5)</sup>, unprecedented migration<sup>(6)</sup>, mental health problems and violent conflicts. Though wars have reduced, ideological conflicts, especially violent extremism, have seen a resurgence and overall global peace has deteriorated for several successive years<sup>(7)</sup>. Nationalism, particularly populism, are on the rise across the world.

On the positive side, the percentage of global youth is on the rise. According to the World Bank's 'The Atlas of

Sustainable Development Goals 2017', 42 per cent of the world's population is under the age of 25. In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people aged 12-24 has steadily risen to 525 million in 2015. If Sub-Saharan Africa is young, then Burundi is the youngest. In 2008, youth under 25 years represented 66% of the total population<sup>(8)</sup>; this trend has been increasing in the last 10 years.

While this is a strong driving force for a developing nation, it is not channelled well, especially when it comes to the political agenda. This reflects the overall global trend of dismal representation of the youth in civic and political participation<sup>(9)</sup>. For humanity to face and eliminate local, national and global challenges, the youth's energy needs to be put to better use.





## Youths are often instrumentalised for political interests”

In the case of Burundi, as one young Burundian said, “Youth are often instrumentalised for political interests”. A pertinent example is the 2015 pre and post-election crisis, in which young people were the primary victims of the conflict. This has been a recurring problem in election season since Burundi gained independence in 1962. Simultaneously, youth have been pushed to the periphery by decision-makers. While policies and youth agendas for peace and sustainable development are ostensibly geared towards the youth, the latter are rarely consulted. Indeed, as Mahatma Gandhi said, “What you do for me, without me, is against me” – any strategy aimed at the youth cannot be successful without their voice being heard by policymakers <sup>(10)</sup>.

As has been documented and proven, the involvement of the youth in decision making is catalytic –it engages young people with peace and security processes from which they are often excluded, and increases the prospects of their future inclusion <sup>(11)</sup>.

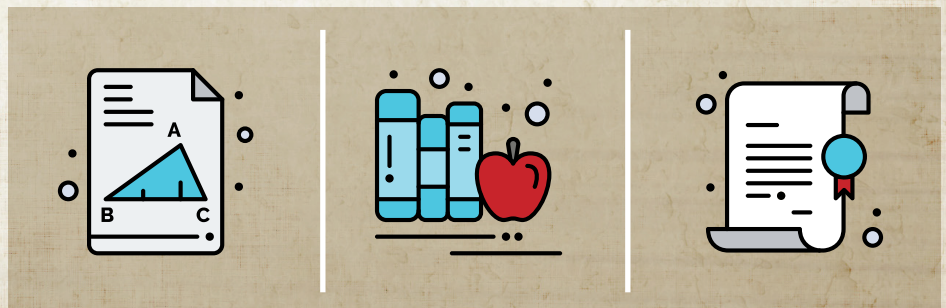
In addition to giving youth their deserved place and including them in the highest levels of policymaking processes, the way they are educated needs to be transformed and reoriented towards pro-social behavioural change, as well as, to enhancing their technical prowess. Education needs to be a process of individual and societal transformation, as well as a process of emotional regulation, compassion and resilience. It must involve critical engagement with reality <sup>(12)</sup> and enable participants to become the change that they wish to see and affect in the world.

The #TAG°Bujumbura initiative built on this combination of including the youth and building their social and emotional competencies to be change agents. This youth-led initiative also drew on the framework provided by UNSCR 2250 by putting young women and men at the centre of dialogue with policymakers so that the two groups could collaborate to find solutions and build sustainable peace in their communities.



**What you do for me, without me, is against me”.**

– Mahatma Gandhi



# 3. TAG<sup>e</sup> Process



**In a month, 12 questions in English, French and Kirundi were posted, garnering over 200 comments and reaching over 1000 Burundian youth in cities such as Gitega and Bujumbura and other smaller towns in different provinces of the country such as Bujumbura Rural, Makamba, Rumonge, Cankuzo and Karusi**

## 3.1 What is TAG<sup>e</sup>?

TAG<sup>e</sup> is a youth-driven inter-generational dialogue on education. Freire (1970) stated that human nature is dialogic and that communication has a leading role in our lives, especially in transforming oppressive, hegemonic structures. TAG<sup>e</sup> is Freirean in that it is premised on the centrality of the transformative nature of the dialogue. TAG<sup>e</sup> incorporated this premise and added a temporal twist to it – ‘across generations’ – to bring together select, highly-qualified youth representatives in a face-to-face dialogue on education with senior decision-makers on issues of common concern.

## 3.2 Why TAG<sup>e</sup>?

In 2017, 42% of the world population was below the age of 25<sup>(3)</sup>. More often than not, these young people are pushed to the periphery of the policymaking process in the areas of education, peace, sustainability and global citizenship; they are not viewed as key stakeholders. UNESCO MGIEP believes that any strategy aimed at the youth cannot be successful without their active engagement in policy-making. Effective youth engagement should include incorporating perspectives from young people into each component of policymaking, education opportunities, programme planning and other vital national/international decision-making avenues. This lies at the core of the ‘Talking Across Generations on Education’ project.

## 3.3 The Online Discussion<sup>3</sup>

In line with the TAG<sup>e</sup> modality, a four-week online discussion preceding the live TAG<sup>e</sup> event was initiated to collect views and recommendations from youth concerning social and emotional education, peacebuilding, and the prevention of violent extremism.

Each week, since August 18, 2019, a thought-provoking question was posted on YELI, and UNESCO MGIEP social media platforms<sup>4</sup> and young people were called upon to respond and brainstorm on the question. These discussions were distilled to collect important ideas and recommendations to be elaborated on further with senior decision-makers during the live TAG<sup>e</sup> event. **In a month, 12 questions in English, French and Kirundi were posted, garnering over 200 comments and reaching over 1000 Burundian youth in cities such as Gitega, Bujumbura and some of the smaller towns, in different provinces of the country such as Bujumbura Rural, Makamba, Rumonge, Cankuzo and Karusi.**

The following section summarises each week of discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Given unreliable internet, the unavailability of most of Burundian youth online (many do not have access and we tried various ways of reaching them, including WhatsApp) and the difficulty of using social media for dialogue, the online discussion did not achieve the expected outputs. Nevertheless, we were able to reach many youths and received innovative ideas and solutions.

<sup>4</sup> Including moderated WhatsApp group chats



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Week 1: August 18-25, 2019

## Education in the 21st-Century World of Automation and Multiculturalism

In the first week, the online discussion engaged the youth on the topic of education in the 21st-century world. Specifically, the discussion focused on the question: *How should we rethink the education system to enable Burundian youth to thrive in the 21st-century world of automation and multiculturalism?*

For the Burundian youth, education should address issues that haunt them today, primarily unemployment, poverty, and the lack of peace and security. According to them, the education

system should be reformed to take into consideration the specific realities and needs of the country – instead of mechanically importing systems from other countries that do not share the Burundian reality. They also agreed that it is vital to ensure that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development and peace, including education that facilitates sustainability, gender equality, human rights and conflict transformation.

Here are some of the comments made by Burundian youth:

*“Continuous audit of education and other educational structures is essential, along with modern tools for quality education that are customised to Burundi.”*

– Nzoyisenga Fikiri added:

*“Educators should be trained and encouraged to identify student’s dreams, talents and needs. Students must also have the opportunity to go to specialised schools that cater to their passion. A well-qualified and sufficient staff will guarantee high-quality education; currently, there are only eighty thousand teachers for more than three million students – an average of one teacher for 40 students. Teachers as well as classroom equipment are unevenly distributed across the country; moreover, we have small, overcrowded classrooms.”*

– Nzoyisenga Fikiri

*“Education should help youth to adapt to a multicultural environment.”*

– Nimubona Jean Bosco

*“Ongoing capacity building for educators has to be organised to suit the current and updated teaching and learning techniques.”*

– Nkurunziza Raphael

*“Education should involve different stakeholders at all levels – parents, government, educators, students, as well as civil society.”*

– Nzokira Francine



## Week 2: August 26 to September 3, 2019

### Social and Emotional Learning and the Prevention of Violent Extremism

Building on the introductory discussion of the first week, especially the consensus that education systems must adapt to local and global realities of the 21st century, the second week's discussion set out to engage the youth of Burundi on the type of education that is needed to build the mental capacities required to prevent violent extremism. Specifically, the aim was to build on the youths' experiences and knowledge about social and emotional learning, and its possible role in the prevention of violent extremism.

The youth were asked to ponder on

the question: **What do you understand by social and emotional education, and how can it build defences of peace in the minds of young Burundians to prevent violent extremism?**

Though there was consensus on the need for social and emotional learning, the youth of Burundi diverged on what it entails and how it should be integrated into schools and wider society. However, there was unanimous agreement on the importance of the entire community's involvement in the process.

### Some of the following comments were made during the discussion:

*“Education should take into account various aspects of life (situation at home, parents' education, social relations, hobbies, etc.) and should be based on interpersonal relations. Its aim should be to achieve the wellbeing of society and the youth, and maintain a balance between emotions and intelligence. It should contribute to developing a sense of togetherness and harmony in society.”*

– Nkurunziza Raphael

*“Teachers, parents, and family – all contribute to imparting learning for young people.*

*At school, the curriculum must be developed in a way that ensures learners' participation in pedagogy. Educators must engage the youth in debates, and support and value their contributions. They must also take into consideration the needs, individual qualities, flaws and weaknesses of each learner and work towards integrating everyone into the group. Learning should be much more practical than theoretical, and be imparted in a healthy environment that inspires confidence in every young person.*

*At home, parents must be good examples in the peaceful management of family conflicts; they must avoid violent and brutal behaviour. They should spend time talking to their children, know and support their specific needs, and help them solve the problems they face in their daily lives.”*

– Nzoyisenga Fikiri





## Week 3: September 4-9, 2019

### Education and Structural Drivers of Violent Extremism

While violent conflicts in Burundi manifest in various ways, they are largely motivated by structural inequities. The fact that each incident has a very specific context makes violent extremism difficult to tackle at a universal level. For example, unemployment or poverty might not be the driver of violent extremism in the United States or Europe, but it is a fundamental driver in Burundi.

Adding this theme to the discussions of the first two weeks, the youth discussed and proposed actionable ways on how education can address structural factors such as poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Some of the comments that emerged are as follows:

*“The education system should focus more on inter-generational dialogue that can be conducted through a community-based forum. For instance, such dialogue should emphasise on giving space to the youth to speak to different stakeholders, including decision-makers. This will help prevent violent extremism and encourage young people to be more innovative in finding solutions to the major issues that Burundian society is facing – for instance, unemployment. Programmes on inter-generational dialogue should be integrated into schools from the secondary to the university levels; the dialogue can be conducted through leadership clubs formed for this purpose. The themes for sessions should be education, peace-building, employment and health.”*

– Ndayisaba Doriane

*“Ideally, education should be able to identify students’ passions and talents, and give them avenues to develop careers accordingly. Stakeholders should adopt and support policies conducive to the socio-economic development and integration of the youth because economically stable young people are better able to resist manipulation and other incitement to hatred.”*

– Salvator Ndayishimiye

*“We need the continuous education of young people on citizenship, the peaceful management of conflicts, and the use of non-violent communication.”*

– Nzosaba Daniel

*“Take steps to eradicate the manipulation of young people by politicians and others with vested interests. Politicians should avoid taking advantage of young people’s vulnerability to further propaganda and activities that legitimise ethnic and political hatred.”*

– Nzoyisenga Fikiri

*“Being the first job provider in Burundi, the government should take measures to create jobs and provide them on the basis of the equality of opportunity and meritocracy.”*

– Nzoyisenga Fikiri

*“Give awards to young people who do great things; this will motivate and encourage other young people.”*

– Ndikumukiza Nelson



## Week 4: September 10-15, 2019

### Maximising Youth-led Initiatives to Prevent Violent Extremism

Burundian youth are working hard to move their country towards sustainable development and peace, including those training fellow youth on entrepreneurship skills and leadership; volunteer teachers and educators; and those working to include women in all aspects of education and politics.

However, like their peers around the world, they feel unappreciated, politically manipulated and blocked from becoming a part of discourses they should be leading.

The government is striving to scale up its youth initiatives through its programme of youth cooperatives. Though the programme provides funds to various youth cooperatives in the country, the support is still miniscule. Building on the discussions of previous weeks, the Burundian youth were asked in the final week to **propose concrete ways in which decision-makers and policy could support them to maximise effective youth-led initiatives to prevent violent extremism.**

### Some of the following comments were made during the discussion:

*“ Decision-makers should prioritise giving meaningful support to young people’s projects and facilitate their participation in decision-making bodies.”*

– Nkurunziza Raphael

*“ The provision of vocational education to young people who are unable to continue their studies (such as orphans and those who are differently abled) should be one of the priorities. Give them not only the knowledge but the means to initiate income-generating activities and psychological preparations.”*

– Niyinganji Elysée

*“ We need to establish school-based clubs to raise awareness on non-violent communication and prevent violent extremism.”*

– Janvier Manirambona

*“ The government should take measures to provide funds to young people to ensure equality of opportunity and meritocracy.”*

– Ndayikeza Apollinaire

*“ Young people’s participation in the conception of visions and missions of different aspects of the country is required.”*

– Nsabimana Diane

*“ Teach young people (from different local organisations) how to write project proposals, fundraise, and manage projects.”*

– Ndayizigiye Thierry

Over  
**200**  
participants  
attended the live  
event

### 3.4 Participants' Profiles<sup>5</sup>

The participants of the #TAG<sup>e</sup> series were youth from various universities, representatives of youth-led initiatives, and policymakers from the ministries of youth and education, in addition to other policy influencers such as representatives of civil society organisations, inter-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies working in the area of education for peace and sustainability in Burundi. Over 200 participants attended the live event.

The final TAG<sup>e</sup> speakers were selected based on their engagement and quality of contribution to the online discussion, along with their own-ground work as evident in the application forms. They comprised diverse (gender, work, geography) but distinguished young representatives of youth-led initiatives from all regions of Burundi. They were – Mr Astere Keza, Ms Doriane Ndayisaba, Mr Daniel Nzosaba, Mr Raphael Nkurunziza, Ms Diane Nsabimana and Ms Francine Nzokira. Among decision-makers, members from the Youth and Education Ministries were prioritised as they work directly with youth and also to ensure that outputs are acted upon after the discussions.

### 3.5 The Live TAG<sup>e</sup>

The TAG<sup>e</sup> modality of bringing youth and decision-makers together on a common platform to engage in a frank dialogue to find solutions to contemporary issues was ideal for YELI Burundi. It was, therefore, decided that all the plenaries of the event be implemented along the lines of TAG<sup>e</sup>.

The main #TAG<sup>e</sup> Bujumbura, on the theme: *The Place of Youth and Education in Preventing Violent Extremism* strived to answer the question: *How do we educate and give young people their deserved place to lead the front against violent extremism?*

The key documents of the event, including the main framing, were revised based on the insights that emerged from the online discussion. Moderated by two youths – a young university professor experienced in engaging youth in substantive dialogue and a youth leader experienced in the on-ground realities of youth in the context of Burundi – the TAG<sup>e</sup> sessions were vibrant and enriching.

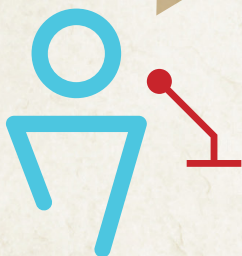
The six #TAG<sup>e</sup> Bujumbura youth fellows<sup>6</sup> – Mr Astere Keza, Ms Doriane Ndayisaba, Mr Daniel Nzosaba, Mr Raphael Nkurunziza, Ms Diane Nsabimana, and Ms Francine Nzokira – engaged in a frank exchange with three senior decision-makers – the representative of the Ombudsman of Burundi; Principal Advisor to the City Mayor, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth, ICT and Posts. Burundian youth present in the room and beyond joined the dialogue via Twitter, where moderators ensured that their comments were picked and discussed on the live dialogue. Participation was facilitated in French, English and Kirundi.

The TAG<sup>e</sup> was timely. From the joy, passion and emotions attached to their words, it was evident that not only do Burundian youth care about their country but they also yearn for a safe space where they can voice their uncensored opinions directly to leaders – a space to brainstorm on solutions to common issues. Likewise, the senior representatives of the

<sup>5</sup> See detailed bios in Annex section

<sup>6</sup> See detailed bios in the Annex section

Thank you very much for this platform. Since my minister and most of my leaders are here, I need to talk. I need to voice thoughts and opinions that I have suppressed for a long time. Voicing them to the ears of my fellow youth and my government is enough.



**The aim of the conference was also to support the UNSCR 2250, explore the role of education, and mainstream social and emotional learning for building the capacities of young people to be agents of peace in Burundi and beyond.”**



government and wider civil society had also longed for a space where they could speak directly to the youth – account to them, challenge them, share stories and mentor them on the realities of a precarious balancing of hope and despair in the face of insurmountable challenges to self and society.

Given this space through the TAG<sup>e</sup>, the Burundian youth and representatives of

the government did not hold back. *“Thank you very much for this platform. Since my minister and most of my leaders are here, I need to talk. I need to voice thoughts and opinions that I have suppressed for a long time. Voicing them to the ears of my fellow youth and my government is enough,”* said one young person who could not let go of the microphone.

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The conference (the TAG<sup>e</sup> plenaries) was officially opened by Mrs Everlyne Butoyi, Minister of Youth, Posts and Information and Communication Technologies (YPicT); Mr Ramadhan Nkurikiye, Principal Advisor to the City Mayor; and Mr Emmanuel Wakana, YELI Executive Director.

- Mr Nkurikiye urged the youth to join in the implementation of development projects and encouraged such TAG<sup>e</sup> initiatives. He wished for a safe and deliberative environment during the conference. He also guaranteed that the Mayor will always support initiatives such as this conference.
- Mr Emmanuel Wakana outlined the objectives of the conference and the TAG<sup>e</sup> plenaries in the light of the socio-political problems faced by Burundian youth, such as unemployment and political manipulation during elections (with emphasis on the upcoming 2020 election). He said, “The aim of the conference was also to support the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2250, explore the role of education, and mainstream social and emotional learning for building the capacities of young people to be agents of peace in Burundi and beyond.”
- After acknowledging the President, Pierre Nkurunziza and reiterating his dictum *“There is no development without youth”*, Mrs Everlyne Butoyi officially opened the conference. She also acknowledged all the partners (especially YELI Burundi and UNESCO MGIEP) for making the event possible. She invoked the vital role of the large number of youth in the world, specifically in Burundi, and the importance of meaningfully engaging them.

According to her, “The initiative responded to government aspirations”. She finished her speech by inviting everyone in the conference to make actionable contributions on different themes so that the youth may be able to prevent violent extremism and support the UNSCR 2250. She promised to continue working with the youth to realise the outputs of the TAG<sup>e</sup> sessions.

To close the inaugural session, the government representatives present reminded the youth that communication is important and challenged the youth to be the first to reach out, and to make application while the government facilitates the process of extending such opportunities to as many youth as possible.

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## There is no development without youth”

Mrs Everlyne Butoyi officially opened the conference.

### Summary of the other sessions (TAG<sup>e</sup> plenaries)<sup>7</sup>

- Mr Simon Kuany, UNESCO MGIEP’s Rethinking Youth Programme Representative and (Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education) PVE-E Specialist, led a substantive hands-on introductory session where he introduced the Minister and the youth to UNESCO and UNESCO MGIEP as well as the key competencies of the social and emotional mandate of the institute. He also highlighted the various i/TAG<sup>e</sup> events conducted worldwide and reiterated the fundamental aim of the TAG<sup>e</sup> to mainstream the youth in the highest levels of the policymaking processes.
- Mr Bienvenu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts, highlighted the achievements of the Ministry in working with and mainstreaming the collective voice of Burundian youth. As examples, he mentioned the Youth National Policy with its three pillars: access to employment, patriotism and peace education. He also highlighted President Pierre Nkurunziza as role model for youth empowerment. Furthermore, he mentioned initiatives such as the National Youth Conference, the upcoming Youth bank; the office of youth centres and the Burundian Agency for employment which has benefited more than 5,000 youth since 2012: 326 youth per annum who received internships with 60,000 BIF per month.
- The first TAG<sup>e</sup> plenary discussion engaged participants on the theme of integrating new pedagogies for peace, such as social and emotional learning for all young people in Burundi. The discussion brought together youth with representatives from the Ministry of Education, UNESCO Burundi, the American Friends Committee and the Global Peace Chain, among others.
- The second TAG<sup>e</sup> plenary discussion continued from the final week of the online discussion and where the first TAG<sup>e</sup> session ended. It explored the theme of creating a favourable and enabling environment for engaging the youth meaningfully, including concrete ways in which policymakers can curate enabling spaces to help young people maximise the effectiveness of youth-led prevention of violent extremism initiatives.

The discussants included youth representatives such as Mr Fikiri Nzoyisenga and senior decision makers such as:

- Mr Therence Mbonabuca, in charge of Patriotism Training, Ministry of Home Affairs
- Mr Bienvenu Irakoze, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth
- Mr Daniel Kagimbi, Representative, UNESCO Burundi
- Mr Isaac Nininahazwe, Representative, Go for Impact Today
- Apostle Samson Ndiwokubwayo, Spokesperson, Youth National Council
- The concluding TAG<sup>e</sup> session was organised under the theme: Youth Agency: Key Actionable Recommendations. It aimed to strengthen youth capacities and place them at the centre of the policy planning process for a Peaceful Burundi. It brought together two youth representatives and two senior civil society leaders – Mrs Floride Ahitungiye, Country Director, Search for Common Ground, and Mr Alexis Arakaza from World Merit Burundi. This important session was a process of gleaning key recommendations that emerged from the two days.

<sup>7</sup> The conference was held for two days and comprised four main plenary discussions. These plenaries were implemented along the lines of the TAG<sup>e</sup> modality.

## 4. Key Messages

The following key messages emerged from the online discussion and live events:



**A well-educated and trained young person is less vulnerable to manipulation and violence”**

Raphael Nkurunziza

1

### Youth are Leaders of Today

Though youth are indeed the leaders of tomorrow, they are first, the leaders of today! As affirmed by the Minister, “there is no sustainable development or peace without the youth!” They should be recognised and given the support necessary for them to be at the forefront of the peace-building process. This can be achieved by creating more avenues – such as town hall discussions – to constantly engage with the youth as well as a conducive environment for youth-led initiatives.

2

### Rethink Education

Since “wars begin in the minds of men and women”, it is in the minds that the seeds of peaceful coexistence must be sowed. Since it is only education that can sustainably alter mindsets, it must shift focus towards the ‘whole brain’ and the ‘whole person’. “A well-educated and trained young person is less vulnerable to manipulation and violence,” said Raphael Nkurunziza. Education systems should focus on social, emotional and leadership competencies of the youth as much as on employability skills. “Education must reflect the realities of the youth on the ground!” and “Times have changed, so should pedagogy”, said the youth of Burundi.

THERE IS NO  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
OR PEACE  
WITHOUT THE  
YOUTH!

3

### In-service Training for Educators is Important

It is vital that educators be imparted with in-service training to enable them to keep up with changing realities and innovations in education – such as technology and transformative pedagogies like social and emotional learning. Their improved capacities will allow them to use innovations to upgrade pedagogy and co-curate a conducive learning environment with students.

In addition to in-service training, educators need to be held accountable for all facets of teaching and learning. This can be done by evaluating learning outputs, auditing and surveying students and parents, to name a few. The focus should be on pertinent issues that transcend finishing the curriculum in time — issues such as the social and emotional well-being of the students inside and outside of the classroom.

4

### Focus on the Entire Community

A young person exists in a complex social environment, wherein several stakeholders directly influence his or her behaviour. As much as the focus should be on the young learner, other members of the community should be part of the solution. To augment school learning, a conducive environment at home, place of worship, community centre and other places of social interaction is key for a change in behaviour.

5

### The Youth are Not too Young to Run

During the discussion, the Minister urged the youth to vie for political offices and decision-making committees in and beyond their constituencies. Through this political involvement, the youth would have a seat equal to other decision-makers. In turn, they can use their political influence to mainstream their collective views, thereby affecting local as well as national development.



# 5. Actionable Recommendations

**D**uring the online discussion and in each of the plenaries, the participants were required to collectively expound on issues and then propose actionable solutions. Elaborating

on the key messages, the following key recommendations emerged from the online discussion and the two days of live dialogues.

Given the variety, the recommendations have been curated for specific stakeholders (though some apply to all stakeholders).



## Recommendations to the Government

### 1 Strengthen formal and informal education

This can be achieved by building the capacities of youth and teachers; setting up initiatives such as youth coaching programmes to enable personal development and well-being; explaining the National Development Plan to young people for them to contribute from an early age; valuing learning in the national language and lastly, by holding all educators accountable by conducting audits on all facets of teaching and learning.

### 2 Mainstream Social and Emotional Learning in all facets of the education system

The competencies of emotional awareness, regulation, resilience, compassion and critical inquiry should permeate pedagogy, content and spaces of learning. Introducing them to young people at an early age is ideal for sustainable peace in the long run.

For example, in-service training on social and emotional learning for teachers to enable them to curate classroom experiences that contribute towards building a peaceful and compassionate society.

Experiential social and emotional learning can also be embedded in leadership training and other vocational courses for youth leaders in the informal sector. This approach can lead to a positive cascading effect – the trained youth leaders become trainers for fellow youth on the ground.

### 3 Promote youth employment

This can be achieved by ensuring transparency and merit-based recruitment; reinforcing the actions of the Burundi Agency for youth employment; fundraising to build youth-centric businesses to employ the youth; and lastly, by promoting youth-led eco-tourism in touristic areas.

### 4 Strengthen programmes which promote the entrepreneurial culture among the youth

This can be achieved by abolishing taxes for at least five years on activities that generate income for the youth and organising (in collaboration with youth organisations such as YELD) initiatives that motivate the youth to find innovative solutions to societal issues.



## 5 Create and expand safe spaces for the youth

These include community centres for art and cultural entertainment, learning and exchange centres etc. Such spaces help break stereotypes and connect at a human and emotional level, thereby building the foundation for harmonious co-existence.

## 6 Set up a platform for Talking Across Generations (other modalities for inter-generational dialogue)

On key themes such as education for peace and democracy. These could begin at local and national levels, and then expand to all of Africa.

## 7 Support youth-led organisations

This can be achieved by continuously building the social, emotional and other leadership competencies of the leaders of such organisations. Training can also be imparted on national policies related to the development of the country; this will ensure that the trained youth leaders extend this information and knowledge to their target population.

This goal can also be facilitated by providing technical and financial support to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to implement activities that engage all the members of the community, therefore, building community resilience that is crucial in preventing violent extremism and building sustainable peace. While technical competence is crucial, financial support is equally essential.



1 The youth should participate in politics by running for positions in government offices or policymaking committees. This will allow them to become an integral part of the policymaking processes at all levels and pave the way for direct and authentic inclusion.

2 The youth should aim to be role models for their peers, especially those who are unable to access opportunities such as TAG<sup>c</sup>. This would require the youth to reach out and share knowledge through training and advocacy. It also requires responsible behaviour; eventually, they must strive to become the very change that they want to see in Burundi and the world.

3 The youth should form associations and work as a collective.

4 The youth should use social media for constructive dialogue, to gain access to new information and opportunities, and most importantly, to collaborate.



### Recommendations to Youth Organisations

- 1 Multiply and expand such events (workshops) for young people. For example, include sessions on non-violent communication, social and emotional training, to name a few.
- 2 Create a common exchange framework for overall advocacy (online and offline). This will help ensure that all voices are heard and included, and facilitate the possibility of mass systemic change.
- 3 Expand TAG<sup>e</sup> activities at the national and local levels, and establish a mechanism to evaluate the results of each TAG<sup>e</sup>.
- 4 Create a radio or a television channel (call it YELD) and other social media channels to encourage such discussions and make them an integral part of youth engagement.



### Recommendations to Parents, Teachers and Educators

- 1 Provide a quality learning environment (inside and outside the classroom) for children from an early age. A conducive environment at home augments the school and the learning process in general.
- 2 Enhance collaboration through joint teaching and learning initiatives.

# 6. Conclusion

The first TAG<sup>e</sup> series in Africa was a huge success. The aim of the TAG<sup>e</sup> was to identify and propose key actionable recommendations for policymakers to include and meaningfully engage youth in decision-making processes, as well as challenge the youth to do their part in building sustainable societies. The gathering ended with a call for each stakeholder to take the next obvious but difficult step – acting on the recommendations.

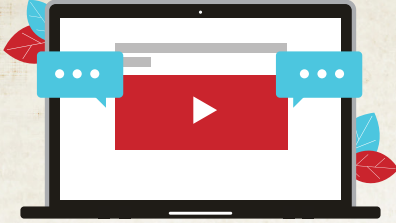
The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts, on behalf of the Minister of Youth, the Principal Advisor of the Bujumbura Mayor, and the YELI Representative, reiterated this strong call in the closing remarks. These senior panellists expressed gratitude for the fact that these face-to-face TAG<sup>e</sup> exchanges had inspired and motivated all participants. It had shown that the participants were caring and concerned patriots who wished to fulfil their country’s potential. They finally called upon everyone to work together so that these recommendations are implemented to establish and sustain peace in Burundian society.



*Following an explicit request by the Ministry of Youth and the Civil Society leaders, and in line with the TAG<sup>e</sup> process, this brief has been prepared, published online and handed over to the Ministry and the partners of the #TAG<sup>e</sup> Bujumbura. YELI Burundi will work with the Ministry to ensure that the actionable recommendations are realised.*

## ANNEX 1

# References



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## ANNEX 2

# Participants Profiles

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### Youth



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#### Mr. Nkurunziza Raphael

Raphael, a young peacebuilder from Burundi, is a regional coordinator of the United Network of Young (UNOY) Peacebuilders in East and Southern Africa. Raphael has facilitated peacebuilding efforts in Burundi and mediated during the demonstrations against the third term of the President of Burundi in 2015. He is also working with young people to localise the UNSCR 2250.



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#### Mr. Keza Axel

Axel is a Burundian activist who focuses on the issues of education and gender equality. Axel is a local coordinator of Students For Liberty and a General Secretary of the Statistics Club of Lake Tanganyika University. He has participated in and contributed to several national and international conferences, such as the International Conference on Peace in Africa in 2018; the Second Regional Conference of Students for Liberty in the Great Lakes Region; and the Summit of the Young Leaders of the EAC in Arusha in 2019.



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#### Ms. Ntirampeba Diane

Diane is a young Burundian who holds a degree in public health and a certificate of merit in nonviolent communication and communication for behavioural change. She spent two years at Afrabu as an agent in charge of monitoring and evaluating the project, supporting women of today to advance the women of tomorrow in order to consolidate peace in Burundi through the organization Cidep. She is a member of the team of the coordination structure at the national level on UNSCR resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security.



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### **Ms. Ndayisaba Doriane**

Doriane is a young Burundian who holds a degree in healthcare management from Southern New Hampshire University, USA. She is a former Director of Hult Prize Campus and a co-founder of DAK, a youth-led non-governmental organisation that aims to provide sexual and reproductive health information to young adolescents.



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### **Mr. Nzosaba Daniel**

Daniel is a young Burundian who leads a movement of young people called “Xaveri”. As a leader of this movement for over three years, he has participated in the seed fair organized by the Food and Agricultural Organisation as an agent for the population of Bujumbura that was affected by torrential rains in 2014. He is also a YALI (Young African Leadership Initiative) alumnus trained in Information Technology and English by US Embassy, Gitega American Center.



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### **Ms. Nzokira Francine**

Francine is a young Burundian student at the High Institute of Community Development at Gitega, Burundi. She is a provincial representative of World Merit Burundi. World Merit is an association of the leaders of change in different countries with the aim of achieving the 17 sustainable development goals. She established the VSLAs (Village Saving and Loaning Associations) for children called KIDS’ BANK in order to improve their lives.

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## Seniors

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### Moderators

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#### **Ntakirutimana Salvator**

Lecturer  
Ecole Normale Supérieure



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#### **Mananga Monique Manuela**

Student, NGOZI University



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#### **Niyungeko Vital**

Director, ABEJ (Agence Burundaise pour l'emploi des Jeunes) Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts

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### Senior Decision Makers

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#### **Butoyi Evelyne**

Minister of Youth, IT and Posts.



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#### **Bizumuremyi Odette**

Assistant of the Minister of Youth, IT and Posts



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#### **Irakoze Bienvenu**

Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts.



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#### **Mbonabuca Térence**

General Director  
Patriotic Formation,  
Home Affairs Ministry



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#### **Bigirimana Elie**

Director of the Department of  
Ombudsman Institution.



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#### **Nkurikiye Ramadhan**

The City Mayor's Principal Adviser  
Bujumbura City



**Harerimana Janvière**

Director (in charge of) Youth Organizations  
Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts.



**Nimubona Anatalie**

General Director of Youth  
Ministry of Youth, IT and Posts

**Speakers**

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**Mrs Floride AHITUNGIYE**

Country Director, Search for Common Ground INGO



**Samson NDIHOKUBWAYO**

Spokesperson, Youth National Council.



**Mr. Renovat Havyarimana**

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning, (MEAL) Officer  
American Friends Service Committee, INGO



**Mr Bruno**

Program Education Manager  
UNESCO Central Africa  
Bureau-Cameroun



**Daniel Kagimbi**

UNPBF Project Coordinator  
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**Stephan Doukhopelnikoff**

Mediator, Author of 'Return to Peace Mediation'  
Master in Law and Mediation (Brussels & Cape Town)  
CEO of IMIBI.info and DOUTTI.com





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**Mr. Isaac Nininahazwe**

Founder of Go For Impact Today(GFIT)



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**Mr. Nzoyisenga Fikiri**

Program manager of Burundi SPARK  
MicroGrants  
Masterpeace Burundi Representative



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**Mr. Niguel Brondon**

Global Peace Chain Burundi-  
Representative



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**Mrs Ange Bimenyimana**

Member Go for Impact Today (GFIT),  
in charge of Women Commission,  
Independent Consultant in HR,  
Peace and Justice



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**Mr. Alexis Arakaza**

WORLD Merit Burundi

## ANNEX 3:

# Previous TAG<sup>e</sup> events



### #TAG<sup>e</sup> Gandhi150 (August 23, 2019)

Article: <https://mgiep.unesco.org/tage>

### ITAG<sup>e</sup> AYUDH (June 19, 2019)

Article: <http://www.ayudh.eu/2019/diversity-in-europe/>

### TAG<sup>e</sup> Delhi (October 2, 2018)

Article: <http://mgiep.unesco.org/article/tagekindness-youth-and-policymakers-dissect-the-role-of-kindness-in-a-time-of-societal-and-planetary-change>

### TAG<sup>e</sup> Vizag (December 17, 2017)

Article: <http://mgiep.unesco.org/article/tagetech-2017>

Video: <http://mgiep.unesco.org/article/tech-2017-talking-across-generations-on-education-tage-vizag>

### iTAG<sup>e</sup> AYUDH (July 22, 2017)

Article: <http://mgiep.unesco.org/article/youth-and-senior-decision-makers-embrace-unesco-mgiep-s-itage-modality-to-engage-in-honest-dialogue-on-role-of-education-in-sustainable-development>

### iTAG<sup>e</sup> PGA/New York (June 28, 2017)

Article: <http://mgiep.unesco.org/article/at-unesco-mgiep-s-first-itage-in-new-york-youth-call-for-an-education-that-fosters-self-actualisation>

### TAG<sup>e</sup> Ottawa (March 8, 2017)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6MP5Sb61uw>

### TAG<sup>e</sup> Quebec (October 30, 2016)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5w6qmvLvoQ&t=56s>

### TAG<sup>e</sup> Delhi (September, 2016)

Video: <https://mgiep.unesco.org/article/tage-delhi-september-2016>





A collaboration with  
YELI Burundi and the Ministry  
of Youth, ICT and Posts,  
Government of Burundi



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