**"Project to Support Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism".**

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| ***PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES*** |
| The rise of violent extremism has become a global challenge. Today, the reality of this scourge and its harmful consequences on the development process and the building of sustainable peace on the African continent are no longer in doubt. According to the report "Pathways to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Dynamics, and Triggers," the main extremist groups active in Africa are very dynamic and take advantage of porous borders to establish their ideals in neighboring countries and sometimes give rise to dormant or active cells. The post-crisis period of the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) will be marked, according to estimates of the Bretton Woods institutions, by a socioeconomic crisis that could seriously affect Africa. Extremist groups operating on the continent will be able to take advantage of this situation to, on the one hand, envelop vulnerable populations, especially youth, and, on the other hand, expand their activities in states that have been relatively unscathed until now. In other words, preventing violent extremism in Africa is a governance challenge that could undermine state efforts to manage social shocks in the aftermath of the health crisis. |
| While more than 50 percent of the world's population is under the age of 30, young people are disproportionately among the victims or perpetrators of violent[[1]](#footnote-1) extremism. Africa in South of the Sahara is far from being spared this scourge. The situation has become more worrisome in recent months, particularly in West and Central Africa. With regard to West Africa, this is due in part to actions by Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, and elections organized sometimes under illegal conditions. The situation in Mali, Northern Nigeria, Burkina and Niger remains worrying. Benin, which shares much of its border with the latter three countries, remains exposed to violent extremism and numerous terrorist threats. The goal of this ***project to support youth resilience to violent extremism*** is to proactively strengthen, in 15 of Benin's 36 border communes, the resilience of youth who are constantly exposed to terrorist threats and the spread of violent extremism in neighboring countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, and even Togo. It will also contribute to the strengthening of grassroots democracy and the promotion of the local economy in the targeted communes and surrounding areas. In this, the project is part of an innovative approach in a context where the development of Benin is facing serious threats because of : the destabilization of democracy since the organization of legislative elections in April 2019, resulting in the arrest of 83 young people and about ten deaths in their ranks; the closure of the border with Nigeria and its heavy impact on the economic activities of women and young entrepreneurs; terrorist threats with the kidnapping of French tourists in the W Park (on the border with Niger and Burkina Faso) on May 1, 2019; the frequent kidnapping of populations with ransom demands in the border communities of Benin; the kidnapping of nine sailors at the Port of Cotonou on November 2, 2019; the terrorist attack on the police station of Kérémou resulting in eight deaths at the border between Benin and Burkina Faso on February 9, 2020, etc., etc. In addition to those challenges related to violent extremism and terrorism, Benin, like most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, faces a number of significant development challenges that provide breeding grounds for extremism. For example, the hard core of poverty in the country is the combination of income and nonincome poverty. These are mainly young people and women. In fact, monetary poverty will affect about 38.5% [[2]](#footnote-2)of the population in 2019, compared to 40.1%, 36.2% and 33.3% [[3]](#footnote-3)respectively in 2015, 2011 and 2007, while non-monetary poverty puts young people in a context of worrying deprivation. Thus, nearly 30.04% of young people suffer from non-monetary poverty. As for women, they are the most affected economic actors (38.52% against 27.11% among men).This project is therefore a highly relevant intervention to give hope to young people in these border localities, exposed to: dropping out of school, unemployment, illegal activities, religious radicalization, delinquency (road cuts for example), the risk of recruitment by extremists and vainly hoping for an improvement in their living conditions. This intervention will help to recreate among the young people the sense of belonging to their localities that seems to be lost among this population. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to improving the resilience of young people (girls and men) in Benin's cross-border communes against violent extremism. The project's implementation approach will be based on the following principles: (i) inclusion and participation, (ii) national ownership, (iii) "Do no harm", (iv) creation of synergies and complementarities between ongoing initiatives and the project; (v) capitalization since lessons learned from similar initiatives related to the issue will be taken into account.The project is based on the fundamental assumption that preventive action at the level of the 36 border municipalities to respond effectively to the specific challenges related to extremism and youth is imperative in the current context of the country. The materialization of the terrorist threat in Benin is more than imminent and has just been confirmed by France's[[4]](#footnote-4) Direction Générale des Services Extérieurs (France's External Services Department).Therefore, the project's theory of change assumes that : * whether it is possible to gain a better understanding of the likely links between border communities, youth, exclusion and violent extremism in the target localities ;
* whether young people (girls and men) in border communities at risk of violent extremism have access to economic opportunities and have the skills to participate in decisions that affect them at all levels;
* whether young people (men and girls) feel involved in accessing basic social services and perceive an improvement in the security of their locality, especially in high-risk public places;

Then, the targeted youth (men and girls) will be more resilient to violent extremism, to the extent that:* youth (men and girls) will be better considered in public policies since these policies will be specifically directed at protecting youth from violent extremism;
* Young men and women will be less likely to be recruited by extremist movements and less susceptible to the rhetoric of extremist movements if they are economically empowered and equipped with the skills needed to prevent and combat violent extremism;
* Young men and women will be able to better access basic social services and contribute to improving security in their communities.

This ***project to*** ***support youth resilience to violent extremism*** relates to **Output 2.5 of CPD Outcome 2 (2019-2023)**. This output is titled as follows: *"National capacities for peaceful conflict management and prevention of violent extremism are strengthened in response to national policies and priorities*". The project also relates to the *National Homeland Security Policy*, which has classified religious extremism as a serious threat to the country. |
| Alignment with facility objectives:Specify how the purpose aligns with  the objectives of TRAC2* This project to support youth resilience to violent extremism is fully aligned with the objectives of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa's Renewed Strategy for Africa and clearly touches on two pillars of that strategy: (i) Youth and women's employment and empowerment; (ii) Peace and security.
* This project strengthens UNDP's integration function in the field. It is intended to be a holistic approach that simultaneously promotes peace, grassroots democracy, youth and girl's employment, and the local economy for the benefit of young people living in poverty in 15 of Benin's 36 border communities. The majority of these border communities are among the poorest in the country. This is the case, for example, of the communes of : Djakotomey (55.11%), Dogbo (52.70%), Nikki (52.13%), Ouèssè (51.49%), Karimama (50.42%), Copargo (49.96%), Aplahoué (49.82%), Pobè (49.59%), Segbana (49.42), Banikoara (49.01%), Grand-Popo (48.80%), Kalalé (48.45%), Malanville (47.80%), Bantè (46.97%), Athiémé (46.25%), Boukoumbé (44.91), Tchaourou (44.18%), Savalou (42.55%), Pèrèrè (42.31%), Bassila (40.34%), [[5]](#footnote-5)etc.
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| * With a cross-cutting impact on accelerating the implementation of the common chapter of the UNDP strategic plan, the project is specifically attached to four signature solutions which are: the fight against poverty, the promotion of good governance, the strengthening of people's resilience in the face of crises and the promotion of gender.
* This project is an innovative initiative because for the first time in Benin, an exhaustive inventory of the links between border communities, youth, exclusion and violent extremism in the targeted localities will be carried out in order to contribute to the orientation of the interventions of the public authorities and associations towards a policy of inclusion of young people in border areas. This will be done in collaboration with colleagues from Accelaretor Labs based in UNDP Country Office and the Programming and Prospective Direction of the three Ministries primarily involved in the implementation of the initiative: Ministry of Interior and Public Security (MISP), Ministry of Decentralization and Local Governance and Ministry in charge of Youth.
* Partnerships envisaged for the implementation of this project will be established with UNICEF, UNCDF, IOM, FAO, WFP, UNV, EU, USA, France, Belgium, Swiss Cooperation and private sector funding partners. Civil society organizations already working with UNDP are natural stakeholders in this initiative as well as the National Coalition for Peace (NCP).
* The UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Democracy and the Center for Studies, Training and Research for Development of the University of Abomey-Calavi are the university partners envisaged for the scientific capitalization of this initiative.
* As 36 of the 77 communes of Benin have a common border with Burkina, Nigeria, Niger and Togo, it is also envisaged to promote South & South cooperation, in the field of protection of young people (girls and men) against violent extremism, between the five countries within the framework of the implementation of the different activities of the project.
* This pilot initiative (covering 15 municipalities) to strengthen the resilience of young people against extremism will be progressively strengthened and replicated in other areas of the country and in all border municipalities depending on the availability of resources. To this end, the initiative will be carried out in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of the National Commission for Combating Radicalization, Violent Extremism and Terrorism; the Beninese Agency for the Management of Border Areas (ABeGIEF) and the Association of Border Municipalities of Benin to ensure national ownership.
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| ***Alignment with regional priorities:**** The project is in line with the United Nations Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, adopted in 2015. This action plan serves as a compass for the international community to fight against violent extremism and, above all, to prevent this phenomenon in its various manifestations;
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| * The initiative fits well with Output 3.2.1 of the UNDP Strategic Plan entitled "*National capacities strengthened for reintegration, reconciliation, peaceful management of conflict and prevention of violent extremism in response to national policies and priorities*".
* The project is fully in line with the logic of the RBA Enabling Action as follows: "*Support the Government for the peaceful management of conflict and the fight against violent extremism, including the development of EVP strategies and action plans*".
* The project is well aligned with ECOWAS objectives in the prevention of violent extremism, including its early warning system.
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| ***Total amount requested:*** USD : 1,950,000 $ |

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| **EXPECTED RESULTS** |
| *The submitting CO should list the expected benefits and indicators for success.***Resource Mobilization****Result :** US$ 1,500,000At least US$ 1,500,000 will be mobilized from the development partners interested in issues of violent extremism, security, youth (European Union, USA, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Swiss Cooperation, South Africa Republic, etc.), other involved UN agencies and the Government. Moreover, in February and March 2021, some meetings between UNDP and the others development partners on the issues of violent extremism are planned, following the January 2021 face-to-face meetings between the UNDP/RR and some Ambassadors such as the new European Union Ambassador, the Ambassador of South Africa Republic, etc. These meetings could lead to some partnerships for the strengthening of the capacities and resilience of the populations in the face of violent extremism and threats of destruction of social cohesion and peace in Benin.The project will also draw on ECOWAS' experience in the prevention of violent extremism, notably through the use of its early warning system.The partnership with UNICEF, UNCDF, IOM and WFP will be negotiated in terms of joint interventions under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2019-2023.**Programme Results*** **Result 1:** A strategic diagnosis of youth involvement in violent extremism in the targeted municipalities and a relevant national strategy/policy for the protection of youth against violent extremism are carried out ;
* **Result 2:** Populations most vulnerable to violent extremism, in particular 300 young men and women (20 young people per commune), are supported to strengthen their socio-economic resilience;
* **Result 3:** Young people (men and girls) feel involved in accessing basic social services and perceive an improvement in the security of their locality, particularly in at-risk public places.

**Other Benefits:** The initiative will also permit to deactivate the sleeper cells of violent extremism identified in certain localities of the country such as: Malanville, Karimama, Segbana, Banikoara, etc. Finally, it will provide an opportunity to build the capacity of these young people on the relationship between human rights and violent extremism. Indeed, the manifestations of violent extremism highlight the social, economic and cultural rights of populations.**Indicators of Success**

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| *The submitting CO should identify specific indicators for each result area, being as specific as possible. Each indicator should include a baseline (if available), target, source of data, and timeline.*

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| **Indicator 1.1 :** Existence of a strategic diagnostic report on youth involvement in violent extremism in Benin.  | ​ |
| Baseline: 0Target: 1Source of data: Project activity report.Timeline for target: April 2021.**Indicator 1.2 :** Existence of a National Strategy to Protect Youth from Violent ExtremismBaseline: 0Target: 1Source of data: Project activity reportTimeline for target: July 2021.**Indicator 2.1 :** A mapping of the promising sectors for young people in the target areas is available.Baseline: 0Target: 1Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISPTimeline for target: June 2021**Indicator 2.2 :** Training curricula on professional trades adapted to the needs of young people are available.Baseline: 0Target: 10Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISPTimeline for target: July 2021**Indicator 2.3** : Installation of kits provided to young men and girls trained for their socio-professional integration.Baseline: 0Target: 300 (20 youth per target locality)Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISPTimeline for target: October 2021**Indicator 3.1** : An institutional framework for the organization and operation of the facilitation units for youth access to basic social services is available.Baseline: 0Target: 1. Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISPTimeline for target: July 2021.**Indicator 3.2** : Facilitation units for access to basic social services led by community UN Volunteers are set up and operational.Target: 1 cell set up in each commune, i.e. 15 cells.Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISPTimeline for target: September 2021.**Indicator 3.3** : Solar kits acquired and installed in at-risk public placesBaseline: 0Target: 105 solar kits at a rate of 7 solar kits per commune.Source of data: Project activity report, DPP/MISP Timeline for target: November 2021. | ​ |
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| ***IMPLEMENTATION*** |
| **Key Activities, Costs, and Timeline:***The submitting CO should identify the implementation plan during 2020-21. The plan should include activities, costings, timeline – activities, estimated costs , and timeline.*

| **Table Control Functionality** |  | **Activity Description** | **Activity Cost** | **Time Line** |
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|  | Activité 1.1 | ​Carry out an exhaustive inventory of the possible links between border communities, youth, exclusion and violent extremism in Benin. | 90 000 | ​ July 2021 |
|  | Activité 1.2 | Develop and disseminate a national strategy/policy to protect youth from violent extremism in Benin. | 150 000 | July-Dec 2021 |
|  | Activité 2.1 | Carry out a mapping of promising sectors for young people in the target areas. | 85 000 | June 2022 |
|  | Activité 2.2 | Guide 300 young men and women in the definition of their life projects and develop training curricula adapted to their needs. | 275 000 | ​July 2022 |
|  | Activité 2.3 | Train young men and women in their chosen professions, in entrepreneurship, advocacy, leadership and their economic and social rights. | 90 000 | August-Oct. 2022 |
|  | Activité 2.4 | Acquire installation kits for the benefit of the young men and girls trained and support their socio-professional integration. | 450 000 | October 2022 |
|  | Activité 3.1 | Elaborate an institutional framework to govern the organization and functioning of the facilitation units for youth access to basic social services. | 30 000 | July 2022 |
|  | Activité 3.2 | Set up and make operational the facilitation unit[[6]](#footnote-6) for youth access to basic social services. | 100 000 | October 2022 |
|  | Activité 3.3 | Identify public places at risk and the security needs of the population. | 30 000 | April 2023 |
|  | Activité 3.4 | Acquire solar kits and install them in at-risk public places through Cash for Work activities for the benefit of young people and women. | 650 000  | May-July 2023 |

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| **Key Partners:***The submitting CO should identify the key government partners and/or other development partners, along with a description on the role of the partner in the activities and if/how they will contribute to the project.*

| **Table Control Functionality** | **Partner** | **Role Description** |
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|  | MISP/ABeGIEF | Administrative management |
|  | Parlement/ Defense and Security Commission | Quality assurance/quality assurance, with national texts, of the institutional framework that should govern the organization and operation of the facilitation units. |
|  | enin Human Rights Commission | Monitoring the integration of economic and social rights in the training modules for young people |
|  | Association of Border Municipalities of Benin | Community Mobilization |
|  | EU, USA, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Swiss Cooperation, South Africa Republic, etc. | Technical and financial support |
|  | ECOWAS | Sharing best practices with its early warning system |
|  | UNICEF | Technical and financial support |
|  | UNCDF | Technical and financial support |
|  | Civil society (CNP, WANEP, ...) | Community Mobilization/ Grassroots Implementation |
|  | UNV | Recruitment and management of United Nations volunteers to be deployed on the project |

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| **Risks:***The submitting CO should identify the risks associated with the project. This could include the risks associated with key partners, factors that may contribute to achievement of results, availability of data, and any other relevant factors.***Political Risk:** The organization of the April-May 2021 presidential election could delay the implementation of certain activities and have a negative impact on delivery. **Action to be taken**: Anticipatory measures will be taken. They will consist of launching all purchases and acquisitions to be made on behalf of the project from February-March. Similarly, this period will be used to make contact with the various actors and to draft the ToR of all activities provided for in the ATP.**Financial risk/resource mobilization:** Financial and development partners may take time to make the expected resources available to the project. They could also withdraw. **Action to be taken**: A Memorandum of Understanding could be signed at the outset and reassure the partner of its visibility throughout the intervention. Diversification of the expected sources of financing (various TFPs, Government, etc.) will make it possible to avoid the risk of withdrawal.**Leadership misunderstanding** between the Permanent Secretariat of the National Commission for the Fight against Radicalization, Violent Extremism and Terrorism of Benin and the Beninese Agency for Integrated Management of Border Areas. **Action to be taken**: If necessary, UNDP will resort to the arbitration of the Minister of the Interior and Public Security. |
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1. Kofi Annan (2015) in "Combating Violent Extremism: A Guide for Youth Made by Youth". Kofi Annan Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Note on poverty in 2019 in Benin. INSAE-July 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Poverty trends in Benin over the period 2007-2015. INSAE [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Reported by Radio France Internationale, February 1, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Poverty trends in Benin over the period 2007-2015. INSAE [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. At the same time, these cells serve as a crucible for the establishment of a permanent dialogue on the issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)