



# ACTING FOR YOUTH

POLICY PAPER



Directorate-General of Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships

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# ACTING FOR YOUTH

# Foreword



Young people are the citizens, parents, economic agents and leaders of the future. Their aspirations, their numbers and their potential make them a major focus of development and international solidarity. This is especially true in Francophone countries where climate and health crises, such as Ebola, are threatening their future.

Meeting young people's expectations means giving them choices and the right to access basic services, mainly those related to education and health.

The demographic dividend is promising for the future, but also a challenge. If this challenge is to be met, ambitious policies need to be undertaken to improve health, education, civic responsibility and the economic environment to generate new opportunities.

To play an active role in building societies and developing their countries, young people need to have tools that encourage their social inclusion and their exercise of civic responsibility. This means giving them the means to take civic action, especially when it comes to climate issues. With this in mind, volunteering and mobility are important steps to becoming a civic-minded citizen.

Making young people drivers of development is key. Programmes must be established to develop and increase their opportunities to become agents of change.

Supporting the aspirations of young people is a way of investing in a sustainable and fair future.

France is fully aware of these issues and is working to address them. With all of its partners, France is promoting sustainable development solutions to improve the lives of current and future generations.

**Annick Girardin**

Minister of State for Development and Francophonie

**3,4** BILLION  
PEOPLE  
in the world are under 25.

**330** MILLION  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
will have entered the job market  
in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.



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# FRANCE'S COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

Today's young generation is the largest the world has ever seen. Over 90% of the 1.8 billion young people live in developing countries, mainly where the quality of education and health services is low and there are few opportunities for decent work. In North Africa, the Middle East and West and Central Africa, the population's pressure on basic social services, the environment and land is becoming a factor of instability, impacting the governance of states in particular. In the South and North alike, young people are faced with the challenges of becoming an adult, social and economic integration, mobility and civic action. France is doing all it can to provide responses to these challenges and to help the most affected countries to do so as well.

Improving the access of young generations to education, health and decent work in developing countries and ensuring their basic rights while helping these countries address the population challenge is one of France's priorities in its international solidarity efforts. It is also a strategic issue in France's international policy.

France's external action for young people is a multi-sector approach based on the specific rights and needs of young people and on an ambitious vision of their place in societies as development stakeholders and sources of innovation. It focuses on better consideration of young people's aspirations when it comes to education, training and inclusion, health, the quality of life and civic responsibility. Efforts are concentrated in West and Central Africa, and especially the Sahel region where needs are most pressing, as well as in North Africa and the Middle East.

## 1. Addressing the population challenge and improving access to family planning services

Addressing the growing population challenge is the first way of helping developing countries that have not yet been able to complete their demographic transition to embark upon a sustainable development course thereby enabling them to satisfy their population's needs and aspirations and benefit

from the demographic dividend. This challenge mainly concerns young people, both as agents of the democratic transition and beneficiaries of it. Since this policy will only have an impact in the long term, it requires firm and sustained commitment of both national authorities and international donors. Respectful of individuals' sexual and reproductive rights, it must be based on information and free choice for couples and especially women. If there is to be genuine choice, full access to contraception methods must be ensured.

France is going to maintain and strengthen its commitment, alongside its partners, to addressing this demographic challenge. It is going to take action to ensure freedom of choice and access to contraception and to family planning, particularly under the Ouagadougou Partnership.

**€1** INVESTED IN FAMILY PLANNING

saves €4 in expenses related to health, education, etc.

(Source: Health Policy project/USAID)

## PARTNERS FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION

Under the Ouagadougou Partnership, France supports family planning and reproductive health in nine Francophone countries in West Africa and contributed an additional €100 million for the 2011-2015 period. Thanks to this partnership, an additional million women will benefit from a modern contraceptive method by 2015.

## 2. Mobilising all stakeholders

France is committed to strengthening political dialogue on the economic, social and demographic challenges of young people in multilateral organisations and in bilateral dialogue with its partners.

It is going to support and assist its partners in developing and implementing public policies and national strategies taking young people into account.

It is going to encourage French local governments, essential stakeholders working in the field, to increase their youth actions. Local governments have expertise and experience in concrete projects, particularly in Africa. Their competencies in the sectors of education, vocational training and employment, sport and culture (both with young people in France and abroad in decentralised cooperation projects) will be fully mobilised to support pro-youth public policy.

France is going to support NGO actions, including through the exchange of best practices via the development of digital forums. It is going to support development and make the best use of the activities of French and Francophone research institutions when it comes to young people, particularly to promote cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, the digital sector and climate.

France is going to mobilise its partners involved in development policies, especially its European ones, to develop interventions promoting young people and strengthening synergies with a focus on four priorities:

- development of skills and talents for civic life and decent work;
- access to health;
- rural development generating opportunities for young people;
- support for youth volunteering and mobility.

## 3. Developing skills and talents for civic life and decent work

127 million children and adolescents are deprived of basic education and 250 million do not know how to read or write. Supporting young people throughout their education is key to strong, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and a central element of cohesion and social peace.

For the 2013-2015 period, France via the Agence française de développement (AFD, French Agency for Development) is going to spend more than €800 million on education, vocational training and employment, with all of its funding tools combined. Half of this amount will be devoted to supporting basic education.

France is going to assist in the development of human capital through support for young students in primary and secondary school and non-formal education (through support provided to civil society organisations), young people enrolled in training centres or higher education institutions and young job seekers. French expertise, particularly through Expertise France and the Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) will be mobilised with this in mind. France is going to launch a regional platform for expertise in vocational training for West Africa. It will focus on all of the potential digital opportunities by setting up a facility for innovation on information and communication technologies for education.

### AFD COMMITMENTS

AFD commitments regarding education, training and school-to-work transition amount to €800 million for the 2013-2015 period in 30 countries. More than half of these funds concern basic and post-primary education and improving the quality of education.

Special attention will be paid to the education of girls, including to combating sexual violence in school.

## FRANCE AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Active in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) since the 1990s, France has redirected its support basing it on a partnership with the private sector. It is now broadening this strategy by supporting the development of the training of high-level technicians and engineers in connection with the shifting economic needs of countries and the co-management of training centres and the financing of vocational training with the private sector.

France is going to strengthen its support to policies and programmes aiming to improve the access and quality of basic education until the end of lower secondary school, especially in rural areas. One in three children under 5 worldwide does not possess an official identification document, which considerably impedes their access to education and training services. Children and young people's access to civil registration is therefore going to be promoted, particularly through innovations provided by NGOs (like the use of mobile phones for birth registration).

France is going to encourage the reform and development of vocational training policies, particularly via public-private partnerships for high-quality training opportunities matching economic demand and driven with professionals. This will ensure effective integration of young people, including in the informal sector and rural areas, the largest source of young people seeking less precarious jobs. It is going to support the governance and financing of national training mechanisms and promotion of apprenticeship as a training and inclusion tool. It is going to mobilise local governments, among others, that support a large number of associations and organisations pooling their efforts, particularly in the areas of agriculture and tourism.

France also provides assistance to consolidating higher education and research by supporting high-achievement, inclusive programmes in partnership with French institutions, including the Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD),

and by developing university education programmes online offered by the France Digital University platform. The co-construction approach of these programmes will help better define the higher education and research needs for the development of partner countries and contribute to building capacities to identify and develop these needs in a "development through research" approach.

France's support to the development of cultural and creative industries and heritage professions provided via its expertise and partnerships with professionals and youth training programmes is leading aims of pro-youth action. Promoting the French language as an advantage in finding employment, both in Francophone countries and in non-Francophone countries, is going to be developed.

Lastly, France is going to assist young people in their successful transition to employment with support to integration systems and employment policies, especially via youth entrepreneurship. It is going to encourage the development of professional networks for young foreign graduates who have conducted their studies in France via the France Alumni portal. France is also going to support innovation to generate jobs by assisting in the creation of innovative SMEs with a strong social and environmental impact via IRD programmes (the programme to provide assistance to innovative enterprises in the Mediterranean) or Campus

## STRENGTHENING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN SENEGAL

The vocational training sector has experienced problems that have slowed young people's access to jobs and decreased companies' competitiveness. The AFD has provided assistance to Senegal since 2005 to help better match training and jobs. The vocational training programme for employment and competitiveness co-funded by the AFD (€12 million) supports training centres in partnership with the private sector and encourages co-management of short training programmes that are adapted to young people and enterprises. This programme concerns 15,000 young people, 40% of them girls.



France (entrepreneurs in Africa). It is going to provide its support to the Global Coalition for Youth Employment, particularly to the development of joint quality standards, and is going to pay special attention to action promoting social diversity and the potential that migrant communities represent for development and interculturalism.

## 4. Improving young people's health

Young people, particularly vulnerable when it comes to health, are a key segment of the population. In developing countries, complications related to adolescent pregnancies and HIV-AIDS are the two leading causes of death among young people, whereas non-communicable diseases are a growing factor in premature death including of young people.

France plays a major role in the fight against HIV-AIDS, especially via its contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNITAID and support to UNAIDS. It is one of the main contributors when it comes to reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health, especially through its support to United Nations Agencies: WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women.

In addition to access to contraception and family planning, France is going to develop sexual and reproductive health actions, particularly by encouraging the use of new technologies and new media to better involve young people.

It is going to strongly commit to eliminate early and forced marriages, female sexual mutilations and violence against women, especially school-related gender-based violence.

France is going to contribute to the dissemination of the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccine, currently the best prevention strategy against cervical cancer (second most common cancer among women worldwide) via its support to the Vaccine Alliance (GAVI).

With all of its contributions and partnerships, France is going to commit to better consideration of young people's needs in health systems and policies, paying particular attention to the vulnerability of girls.

MORE THAN  
**€300** MILLION

of France's development assistance in 2012 went to sexual and reproductive health.

## SUPPORTING INNOVATION FOR THE HEALTH OF TEENAGERS AND GIRLS

A call for Initiative 5% projects, managed by Expertise France, will aim in 2015 to support innovative approaches to prevention, testing and care for male and female adolescents in the eligible Francophone countries, combating the stigma they experience and strengthening their involvement. These projects related to action by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will receive €5 million.

It is going to aim to strengthen young people's access to education, health (including the prevention of non-communicable diseases such as obesity or diabetes), health services, care and treatment.

## 5. Developing rural youth opportunities

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world that will remain mainly rural until the mid-2030s and its rural population will continue to grow beyond 2050. Some 65% of young people entering the job market will be from rural areas. Yet there is

currently not much incentive for young people in rural areas. Work and living conditions are not very favourable and access to employment, productive resources and basic services is much more difficult than elsewhere. Rural youth will only be able to continue living in these regions if more attention is paid to improving rural living conditions.

The priority that France has given to family farming in its international solidarity and development policy will make rural youth the direct and indirect beneficiaries of its rural development action.

Efforts to improve living conditions should be pursued including those to help open up these regions (rural roads, mobile phone networks) and to improve basic services (health, education, water, electricity) and the quality of life, by improving access to recreational activities and the Internet.

Developing economic attractiveness of rural areas is an essential condition for fulfilling young people's aspirations. France is going to support the development of productive infrastructures via access to funds to finance economic projects of rural youth, development of irrigation and processing units, storage and transport of agricultural products. France is also going

## IMPROVING YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTEGRATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN CAMEROON

The €35-million support programme for reforming and developing agricultural vocational training improves professional qualifications and encourages the integration of young people in the agricultural sector. To do this, it reforms courses and develops work-study programmes in which young people are trained on farms and provides support to the integration of young people into their regions. By 2017, some 100 rural agricultural training centres will see their courses reformed and their means increased so that 4,000 young people can be integrated a year.

**€120** MILLION

of AFD funds went to the pro-youth components of sustainable development projects of rural territories, agricultural sectors and food security in 2014.

to support reflection in connection with research and training institutes on the development of new jobs in rural areas (crafts and small trade, ecotourism, upstream and downstream agricultural sectors), particularly for young women.

The integration of young people in agricultural sectors will also be actively promoted, by reforming rural agricultural training programmes and providing better assistance to young people in implementing their projects so that they are innovative, profitable and sustainable. This will require a more proactive approach to provide these young people access to the land and funds needed for them to set themselves up as farmers or agricultural entrepreneurs, but also to provide close and professional technical and economic advice for successful integration. France is particularly going to support innovations enabling sustainable economic development via the dissemination of environmental farm practices.

Local governments have a leading role to play in supporting rural youth. France is going to continue supporting decentralisation processes and building the capacities of local governments to implement local development plans (including through decentralised cooperation). Professional organisations, namely farmers' organisations, also play an important part in the economic development of rural regions. France is going to continue its work to help strengthen these organisations. To achieve balanced development, rural youth will be encouraged to be involved in the decision-making of the community and participate in community and professional management entities.

Lastly, France is going to support exchanges involving young people and experience between the French rural communities

and those of its Southern partners, through structures such as *Maisons Familiales Rurales* (rural vocational training centres). These exchanges have produced – when they were implemented – outstanding structures.

## 6. Giving young people the means to become agents of change

For young people, whether male or female, civic action is often one of the first acts of self-fulfilment and emancipation and a first step to becoming a civic-minded citizen. It needs to be possible over the long term, encouraging intergenerational relationships and addressing gender issues. On account of their flexible nature and the ideals they promote, associations, which are local and citizen based, are often the most conducive places for this to happen.

France is going to promote youth civic action, building capacity of associations in developing countries – particularly youth movements – as well as the exchange and sharing of experience by French and foreign civil society stakeholders. In the area of media and social networks, this commitment is reflected for example in the training of young journalists by the French agency CFI Media Cooperation, the Mondoblog platform backed by Radio France International (RFI), as well as by initiatives launched by France Médias Monde or TV5 MONDE with a view to educating people about media, encouraging intercultural dialogue and promoting the French language. France is going to develop meetings, exchanges and the creation of joint projects between young people in France and abroad, through support to the organisation of youth forums like the ones in Monastir and Algiers, or even support to youth projects for heritage preservation.

This priority is highlighted in North African and the Middle Eastern countries, where young people are still seeking to integrate socially, economically and politically.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI) and the AFD take this priority into account and have offered to address it in its interventions focusing on education and training, job creation, support for innovation and

# 15,000

scholarships and internships are granted to young people by France every year.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FRANCE

In 2013-2014, French universities welcomed more than 100,000 students from countries in the South, representing nearly half of the international student population, mainly from sub-Saharan African and Maghreb countries.

initiatives of job-generating enterprises and strengthening civil society. Local actions aiming to promote young people's access to culture and sport will be continued.

International mobility, a recognised factor of integration into the workplace, particularly in studies, contributes to broader independence and openness to the world.

France is going to concentrate on support to student mobility through scholarship programmes (57% of them concern students in the South) and the introduction of a “talent passport” to facilitate mobility of those with the most merit. It is also going to continue to support the top foreign baccalaureate holders of French lycées around the world (network of the Agency for French Education Abroad – AEF) with some 200 “excellence” scholarships in French universities. French agencies and partners will develop various projects for foreign students in the area of civic action and responsibility, entrepreneurship and cultural creation, such as the French Institute with CultureLab and Labcitoyen programmes for young professionals working in culture and young opinion leaders, the network of Alliances françaises to teach French or French-German or French-Quebec Offices for Youth.

France is also going to mobilise local stakeholders, namely through the National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation (CNCD). The conclusions of the working group on youth mobility will be published in 2015 enabling more local stakeholders to be mobilised across all of these areas. Exchanges between municipalities will also be promoted particularly through support to NGOs.

Volunteering, another form of international mobility, is civic action in the realm of international solidarity that contributes to social diversity and strengthening cohesion. It is therefore a step to becoming a civic-minded citizen at the service of sustainable development and the promotion of peace and concerns young people in the North and the South alike. Every year, some 3,000 volunteers commit to work on projects furthering development.

France is going to work to see international volunteering evolve with several ideas in mind:

- simplifying the system so that as many people as possible can become volunteers working for international solidarity with a more diverse social background of volunteers;
- ensuring better recognition of civic action so that it is valued in the professional career of young volunteers;
- strengthening exchanges between volunteers in the North and the South and support for the emergence of volunteering in the South.

Through the France Volontaires platform, France is therefore going to work on creating a single portal of international volunteering to improve access to information. It is going to make efforts to make mutual volunteering with partner countries a more widely used concept. It will develop experiments to broaden the participants of international volunteering and include more young people who have fewer opportunities.

## FUEL PROJECTS, SHARE EXPERIENCES

Every year, the SafirLab programme of the Institut français and CFI Media Cooperation recruits young people from Arab Spring countries and with potential for initiatives in the area of media and the civil society. It helps them fuel their projects and share their experiences thanks to a training seminar, which provides them with an opportunity to meet French organisations that could be interested in backing their projects.

# FRANCE COMMITS TO

**1 MOBILISE ALL OF ITS PARTNERS,**  
at national and international level,  
for better consideration of young people  
in development policies, including  
in the post-2015 agenda  
for development.

**2 STRENGTHEN POLITICAL DIALOGUE  
ON THE POPULATION CHALLENGE  
AND ACTION IN FAVOUR  
OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

to birth spacing and the recognition  
of sexual and reproductive rights  
in multilateral organisations and  
in bilateral dialogue with its partners.

**3 SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SKILLS AND TALENTS  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE,**

by strengthening its commitments  
to developing basic education  
and support to implementing vocational  
training policies, both at the secondary  
and higher education levels, to improve  
young people's employability  
and school-to-work transition.

**4 CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER HEALTH  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

by supporting universal access  
to sexual and reproductive health  
and the prevention, screening  
and treatment of HIV-AIDS for young  
people and by ensuring better  
consideration of young people's needs  
in health systems and policies  
and within international institutions  
working in the area of health.

**5 STRENGTHEN ITS ACTION  
TO IMPROVE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

in agricultural sectors and rural regions  
through apprenticeship, assistance  
in starting up and farming advice,  
access to land and funds for family  
farms, support for young people taking  
more responsibility in professional  
organisations and local governments  
and improving living conditions in rural  
areas.

**6 PROMOTE VOLUNTEERING  
AND MOBILITY**

to develop young people's autonomy  
and their inclusion into society,  
to enable them to contribute to public  
debate and to be agents of change.



# Partners

## **Public agencies and organisations working on implementing the French youth strategy:**

- Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE);
- Agence française de développement (AFD);
- Campus France;
- CFI Media Cooperation;
- Expertise France;
- France Médias Monde;
- France Volontaires;
- Institut français;
- Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD);
- French-German Youth Office;
- French-Quebec Youth Office;
- Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP);
- National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation (CNCD);
- TV5 MONDE.

Local governments are also mobilised.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>AEFE</b>	Agence pour l'enseignement français à l'étranger (Agency for French Education Abroad)
<b>AFD</b>	Agence française de développement (French Agency for Development)
<b>CIEP</b>	Centre international d'études pédagogiques (International Centre for Pedagogical Studies)
<b>CNCD</b>	Commission nationale pour la coopération décentralisée (National Commission for Decentralised Cooperation)
<b>GAVI</b>	Vaccine Alliance (formerly the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations)
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HPV</b>	Human Papillomavirus
<b>IRD</b>	Institut de recherche pour le développement (Research Institute for Development)
<b>MAEDI</b>	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>RFI</b>	Radio France International
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and vocational education and training
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV-AIDS
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNITAID</b>	International Drug Purchase Facility
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation

## ACTING FOR YOUTH

