

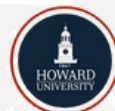
INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
**YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY (YPS)
IN THE SAHEL**

On

*Youth, Actors for Peace and Security in West and
Central Africa :
Challenges and Opportunities for a Sustainable
Future*

Call for Papers

Juin 16 to 18, 2025
Hydride
(Yaounde, Cameroon / online)



Partner institutions

The Réseau des Jeunes Chercheurs Africains,
the Center for African Studies at Howard University in Washington D.C., USA,
the Institut d'Etudes Avancées in Saint-Louis, Senegal,
the PROSPEREN - Prospective et Renaissance Center in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,
the Centre d'Études en Stratégie, Sécurité et Développement in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and the Conseil National de la Jeunesse du Cameroun,

Important Dates

- Opening of the call for papers: **February 10, 2025**
- Deadline for submission of abstracts: **March 10, 2025**
- Committee decision: **March 15, 2025**
- Reception of final presentations: **May 15, 2025**
- Date of the Conference: **June 16 to 18, 2025.**

Registration Forms

1. **submission to the call for papers** : [Inscription](#)
2. **Participation in the conference** : [Inscription](#)



Introduction

Following the symposium organized from June 16 to 18, 2025, by the Network of Young African Researchers on the theme "(Re)thinking/(Re)bandaging the image of Africa for the development of the continent", a consortium of organizations and academic institutions, concerned by the security situation and conflicts in the Sahel region, has committed to exploring the potential of youth with a view to their full involvement in preventing violence, promoting peace and security and resolving conflicts in this part of the African continent. With this in mind, the consortium formed by the Network of Young African Researchers, the Center for African Studies at Howard University in Washington D.C, USA, the Institut d'études avancées in Saint-Louis, Senegal, the Centre PROSPEREN - Prospective et Renaissance in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the Centre d'Études en stratégie, Sécurité et Développement in Yaoundé, Cameroon and the Conseil national de la jeunesse du Cameroun, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cameroon and the Empowerment and Demographic Dividend in Sub-Saharan Africa Project + (SWEDD+), are planning to organize an international conference on the theme "Youth, Actors for Peace and Security in the Sahel: challenges and opportunities for a sustainable future". The conference is scheduled for June 16 to 18, 2025 in Yaoundé, Cameroon.



I. Background and rationale

- **The Sahel, an area long-standing disputes**

The West and Central African , particularly the region Sahel¹ , is today a geopolitical space facing complex peace and security challenges. This situation is exacerbated by socio-economic, political and environmental factors. As a junction between North Africa and the West African coast, this region was a hub for merchants from the 11th and 12th centuries onwards (Hameth Ba, 2007). Texts by North African Arab authors (Al-Bakri and Ibn Battuta) and black scholars converted to Islam describe the cities of Timbuktu, Gao, Koumbi Saleh and the Sahelian kingdoms² as centers of attraction, encounters, economic opportunity and culture. The empires of Ghana, Manding and Songhai prospered in the Sahel thanks to their control of trans-Saharan trade routes and their wealth of gold and salt. They marked African history with their cultural, economic and political influence, before declining due to internal crises and external invasions (Shalabi, 1959)³ . Contemporary sub-Saharan researchers (Ki-Zerbo, 1978; Lam, 1993; Barry, 1988...) have also made them their focus of interest. Large political entities, such as the Mossé, Kanem-Bornou and Macina Bambara kingdoms, were formed in this trading area. Mostly nomadic or sedentary, the peoples living in this area are also very diverse (Touaregs, Peuls, Toucouleurs⁴ , etc.).

"The succession of empires whose main power was based on the wealth extracted through control of the trade routes that facilitated trade in the region's gold, slaves, textiles and other products has turned the Sahelian territory into an area of permanent disputes"⁵ . Since then, the Sahel has become a region at the heart of many issues, facing numerous security and development challenges.



• Contemporary challenges in the Sahel

Over the past ten years, the Sahel has become a zone synonymous with instability and insecurity. The endogenous causes of this insecurity stem from four factors:

- High demographic growth reveals a profound mismatch between population growth and wealth creation;
- The Sahel is lagging behind the world's poorest countries in economic terms;
- Climate change in the Sahel is having a profound impact on the resilience of local populations.⁶
- The Sahel suffers from weak governance and fragile institutions that exacerbate social and political inequalities, generating frustration among the population.⁷
- It has to be said that the security crisis in the Sahel represents a global threat, and its most notable impacts are borne by young people. Indeed, youth, who make up a significant proportion of the population (around 63 % of the Sahel's population is under 25)⁸, play a crucial role in the dynamics of Sahelian African countries.

According to UNFPA estimates⁹ (2024), the Sahel zone has grown from 75 million inhabitants in 1950 to 283 million in 2012, a multiplication of nearly 4 times in 60 years. Average projections put the population at 403 million in 2025, rising to 720 million in 2050. It is important to note that this demographic boom is accompanied by a very young population, and therefore an opportunity to take advantage of a demographic dividend whose capture is mortgaged by the multiple crises facing the Sahel region.

[1] Ayouba Karimou et Zakaria A. Coulibaly, Analyse : Menaces sécuritaires au Sahel : Enjeux et perspectives. In Le Sahel <https://www.lesahel.org/analyse-menaces-securitaires-au-sahel-enjeux-et-perspectives/>

[2] Bangura, Y. (2014). Mauvaise gouvernance et conflit en Afrique: Perspectives critiques. Londres : Zed Books.

[3] <https://www.alliance-sahel.org/presse/prochains-evenements/numerique-et-emplois-des-jeunes-au-sahel-relever-les-defis-et-creer-des-opportunites/>

[4] <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard>

The central role of youth

In a context marked by protracted conflicts, socio-economic challenges and vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change, young people represent both a population at risk and a key resource for resilience.

In the face of crisis and insecurity in the African Sahel, it is imperative to understand how young people can be agents of positive change, capable of building resilience and contributing to the region's stability. Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), the recognition of young people as a positive force in conflict prevention and resolution has gained momentum. As a result, the impact of peace and security policies and strategies can only be strengthened by a thorough understanding of the experiences of violence, injustice and exclusion among young people in the African Sahel.

- Thus, involving young people, particularly using a NEXUS approach, in security issues in the Sahel is crucial for several reasons:
- They make up a large majority of the population (63% under 25).
- They are socio-economically very vulnerable and are therefore frequently involved in security crises.
- In view of the demographic weight and potential of young people in Africa, the Heads of State and Government dedicated the African Union (AU) roadmap on the demographic dividend (DD) adopted in 2017 in Addis Ababa to youth. This presidential roadmap puts the spotlight on young people in capturing the DD, which can only be achieved in an environment where peace and security prevail
- They are partners in the development of peace and security strategies
- They are agents of change: young people are seen as dynamic and innovative, able to mobilize their peers around common causes and promote local solutions to security and political problems.

Exemplary initiatives in the region

Young people in the Sahel are actively involved in innovative initiatives. Six concrete examples, among many others, can illustrate this:

- In Benin, the USAID-OTI Littoral Regional Initiative (PRAPC) mobilizes young people through a community-based approach to strengthen social cohesion and dialogue between communities.
- In Burkina Faso, YAGA (Youth Anti-Gang Action) mobilizes young people to combat urban violence and promote social cohesion.
- In Cameroon, thanks to the achievements of the Stabilization and Recovery of Communities Affected by the Security Crisis in Extreme-No Project, youth organizations have led initiatives to help communities directly or indirectly affected by security crises to recover, and participate in the "Youth, Peace and Security Observatory" (OJPS).
- In Mali, young people take part in community mediation initiatives to resolve inter-ethnic and inter-community conflicts. ;
- In Mauritania, youth networks play a crucial role in promoting inter-community dialogue and preventing violent extremism.
- In Niger, the use of digital technologies (social networks) by young people to raise awareness of security and social cohesion issues, as well as to mobilize support and promote conflict prevention campaigns, is producing tangible results. Through the Think Peace Sahel Network (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), they are involved in peace education initiatives and campaigns to prevent radicalization in schools and prisons.

A conference to explore opportunities

With this in mind, the present symposium aims to explore the mechanisms, frameworks and forums through which young people can be mobilized to promote peace and security, while identifying the obstacles they face in their interactional relationships with the primary stakeholders. Discussions on how to adopt a new, more inclusive approach to youth, peace and security should draw on the experiential knowledge and perspectives developed by active, aware youth, and on their potential contributions to solving the complex problems facing Sahelian states.

The symposium will be organized in the form of plenary sessions, round tables, workshops and interactive discussion sessions. Participants will include young leaders and activists from the Sahel region, researchers and academics specializing in peace and security studies, policy-makers and government representatives, actors from non-governmental organizations and civil society, actors from international organizations and development partners.



General objective

Examine current peace and security challenges in the Sahel and promote the inclusion and involvement of young people in peace initiatives, community resilience and violence prevention.

Specific objectives

1. Analyze current peace and security challenges in the Sahel and their impact on young people

This section aims to understand how security problems in the Sahel directly affect young people. The aim is to examine data, testimonies and experiences to build up a clear picture of their situation in the face of security crises.

2. Examine trends in peace and security in the Sahel and assess the state of commitment to youth inclusion

This objective explores recent developments in the fields of peace and security, while assessing efforts to integrate young people into these processes. Emphasis is placed on evaluating current policies and initiatives.

3. Identify training and resource needs and opportunities for youth engagement in peace and security initiatives

The aim is to identify gaps in training and resources that could prevent young people from becoming fully involved. It also seeks to highlight opportunities for them to contribute effectively to peace initiatives.

4. Promote the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies to strengthen community resilience through youth involvement in violence prevention, peace and security promotion and conflict resolution.

This objective encourages the sharing of experiences and innovative approaches that have already proved effective in other contexts. The aim is to identify what works and adapt it to local needs.

5. Promote collaboration and networking between young people, researchers, policy-makers and civil society organizations

This point aims to create spaces for dialogue and cooperation, facilitating sustainable partnerships between different stakeholders involved in security and peace.

6. Develop policy and practical recommendations to support young people as key players in peace and security.

The aim is to produce concrete guidelines for decision-makers on how to better integrate young people into peace and security processes, based on the discussions and analyses arising from the symposium.



Adoption of an action plan for youth, peace and security :

Draw up a joint roadmap including concrete actions to be implemented within six or even twelve months of the symposium. This plan would be supported by the participants, in particular youth organizations and decision-makers.

Networking and partnerships :

- Setting up or strengthening regional networks of young leaders to exchange experiences and collaborate on peace and security initiatives.
- Establishing partnerships between young people, researchers, decision-makers and NGOs, with clear commitments to joint projects.

Specific and immediate recommendations:

- Proposals for specific measures to integrate young people into conflict prevention strategies, to be forwarded to national and regional institutions.
- Recommendations to strengthen the presence of young people in local and international advisory bodies on safety.

Document production :

- Publication of a summary report including contributions, main conclusions and commitments made during the symposium.
- Drawing up a best practice guide, based on the initiatives presented, for players working with young people in high-risk areas.

IV- Development priorities

We invite contributors to submit proposals for papers in the following non-exhaustive areas:

1. Analyze current peace and security challenges in the Sahel and their impact on young people

This section aims to understand how security problems in the Sahel directly affect young people. It involves examining data, testimonies and experiences to build up a clear picture of their situation in the face of security crises.

2. Examine trends in peace and security in the Sahel and assess the state of commitment to youth inclusion

This objective explores recent developments in the fields of peace and security, while assessing efforts to integrate young people into these processes. Emphasis is placed on evaluating current policies and initiatives.

3. Identify training and resource needs and opportunities for youth engagement in peace and security initiatives.

The aim is to identify gaps in training and resources that could prevent young people from becoming fully involved. It also seeks to highlight opportunities for them to contribute effectively to peace initiatives.

4. Promote the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies to strengthen community resilience through youth involvement.

This objective encourages the sharing of experiences and innovative approaches that have already proved effective in other contexts. The aim is to identify what works and adapt it to local needs.

5. Promote collaboration and networking between young people, researchers, policy-makers and civil society organizations.

This point aims to create spaces for dialogue and cooperation, facilitating sustainable partnerships between different stakeholders involved in security and peace.

6. Develop policy and practical recommendations to support young people as key actors in peace and security

The aim is to produce concrete guidelines for decision-makers on how to better integrate young people into peace and security processes, based on the discussions and analyses arising from the symposium.



Paper proposals must include

- A communication title.
- An abstract (300 to 500 words) detailing the objectives, methodology and expected results.
- A brief biography of the author(s), including the institutions or structures with which they are affiliated and their contact details.
- Proposals may be submitted in English or French.
- All proposals must be sent by March 10, 2025 to the following address: *lsilim@lignanconsulting.com / fadelsoubianebah@gmail.com*.
- The deadline for submission of the full paper is May 19, 2025 :
- Papers should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words, including references and appendices. This length allows for in-depth analysis while remaining concise.
- Papers must be submitted in Word format (.docx). Documents should be written in Times New Roman, size 12, with 1.5 line spacing.
- List of all sources cited, formatted according to APA or MLA standards.
- All work must properly cite sources and comply with ethical research standards. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden.

Selection and Publication

Proposals will be reviewed by a scientific committee made up of experts in peace and security, community development and youth engagement. Selected papers will be presented at the symposium to be held from June 2 to 4, 2025 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The best papers from the symposium will be published in a special issue of an academic journal or in a collection of symposium proceedings.

All contributions will be examined by the scientific committee to enrich the discussion on the vital role of young people in maintaining peace and security in the Sahel.

VI-Scientific Committee

Mohamed Camara (Howard University, Washington DC, USA),
Babacar Fall (Institut d'Études avancées de Saint-Louis du Sénégal),
Aicha Pemboura (Centre d'Études en stratégie, Sécurité et Développement,
Yaoundé, Cameroun & Université Yaoundé 2, Cameroun),
Issa Saibou (Université de Maroua),
Sambo Armelle (Université de Maroua),
Fadimatou Iyawa Ousmane Conseil National de la Jeunesse du Cameroun),
Fadel Boubiane Bah (Université de Ngaoundéré, Cameroun),
Salimata Nébié Conombo (Centre PROSPEN - Prospectives et Renaissance,
Ouagadougou -Burkina Faso ;
Beatriz Mesa (International University of Rabat, Morocco),
Farid El Asri (International University of Rabat, Morocco) ,
Amadou Mamadou Camara (Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal),
Ada Pouye (SENEPLUS , Senegal),
Ababacar Gaye Fall (Institut d'Études avancées de Saint-Louis du Sénégal),
Linda Silim Madeleine (Howard University, Washington DC, USA) ,
Fadel Boubiane Bah (Université de Ngaoundéré, Cameroun)

VII-Organizing committee

Linda Silim Madeleine (Howard University, Washington DC, USA),
Fadimatou Iyawa Ousmane conseil National de la Jeunesse du Cameroun),
Fadel Boubiane Bah (Université de Ngaoundéré, Cameroun),
Sambo Armelle (Université de Maroua),
Aicha Pemboura (Centre d'Études en stratégie, Sécurité et Développement à
Yaoundé du Cameroun & Yaoundé University, Cameroon), etc.



VIII- Indicative bibliography

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- <https://www.oxfamfrance.org/financement-du-developpement/qu-est-ce-que-le-sahel/>

