



**CONTINENTAL YOUTH CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME ON AFRICAN UNION
SHARED VALUES INSTRUMENTS**

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

**25-28 AUGUST 2026
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

A. CONTEXT

Africa is undergoing rapid transformation that demands innovative and inclusive governance approaches to meet emerging democratic, human rights, electoral, and leadership challenges. Central to this transformation is the meaningful participation of young people at the local, national, regional, and continental levels. Excluding youth from governance processes not only undermines democratic development but also threatens the continent's long-term stability and prosperity.

Although young people make up the majority of Africa's population, they remain significantly underrepresented in political institutions and leadership positions. Structural barriers — limited political will, high entry costs into politics, inadequate access to resources, and entrenched institutional biases, continue to restrict youth engagement and civic participation more broadly. These barriers perpetuate cycles of marginalization, leaving young Africans disproportionately affected by socio-economic inequality and political exclusion.

At the same time, Africa has the world's fastest-growing youth population, projected to rise from 447 million in 2019 to approximately 1.3 billion by 2100. This demographic reality presents both risks and opportunities: youth are critical actors in strengthening democratic governance, promoting peace, and preventing conflict. Their leadership is essential to realizing [Agenda 2063](#), particularly Aspiration 6, which envisions "an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth."

In response, the African Union's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), through the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Platform, has developed the [AGA-APSA Citizens' Engagement Strategy](#) (CES). The CES provides an integrated framework for engaging youth, women, and civil society in democratic governance and peace processes. Building on this framework, PAPS has produced practical tools, including [Training of Trainers \(TOT\) manuals on youth participation in electoral processes](#) and Pan-African leadership, in collaboration with the RECs/RMs and other AGA-APSA partners.

Under the leadership of H.E. Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, the Department has made Youth Inclusion and Mainstreaming a central thematic priority, reflecting growing recognition that meaningful youth engagement in governance, peace, and security processes is a key preventive and peacebuilding measure.

Building on this momentum, and recognizing that strengthening youth leadership and civic competencies is essential to promoting peaceful participation in democratic governance and preventing conflict, the AGA-APSA Secretariat will convene a Continental Youth Capacity-Building Programme at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from **25 to 28 August 2026**. Anchored in the African Union Shared Values and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), the Programme aims to equip youth to play proactive roles in advancing democracy, peace, and security at the national and continental levels.

B. GOAL

To equip African youth leaders with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to actively and meaningfully participate in democratic governance, human rights promotion, and electoral processes at the national and continental levels, in line with the African Union Shared Values and the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

C. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance young people's knowledge and practical skills in democratic governance, human rights, elections, and leadership through targeted, policy-relevant training.
2. Strengthen youth leadership and civic competencies to enable peaceful, informed, and responsible participation in democratic and electoral processes.
3. Promote youth inclusion and mainstreaming in political and governance processes at the national, regional, and continental levels as a conflict-prevention and peacebuilding measure.
4. Increase awareness and utilization of AU Shared Values instruments and normative frameworks particularly the [African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance \(ACDEG\)](#) among young women and men across AU Member States.
5. Foster sustained engagement between African youth and the African Union by giving first-time participants direct exposure to AU institutions, processes, and mechanisms.
6. Build a continental network of informed youth leaders and change agents capable of advancing democratic governance, peace, and security within their communities and across the continent.

D. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Enhanced knowledge and practical skills among youth participants in democratic governance, human rights, and electoral processes.
2. Strengthened networks and peer connections among young leaders across AU Member States.
3. Increased understanding and application of AU Shared Values instruments, particularly ACDEG, at the national level.
4. A cohort of youth change agents equipped to advance democratic governance and peacebuilding within their communities.

E. PARTICIPANTS AND SELECTION PROCESS

Participants are drawn from young women and men aged 18-35 from across African Union Member States, including youth leaders from civil society organizations, youth-led movements, political parties, electoral bodies, governance and human rights institutions, academia, media, and community-based initiatives, with due consideration for gender balance, regional representation, and inclusivity of marginalized and underrepresented groups.

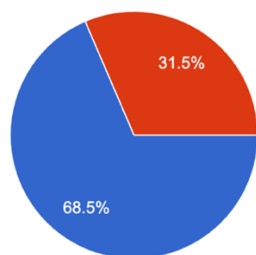
To provide a meaningful opportunity for young Africans who have not previously had access to African Union-organized capacity-building initiatives an open call for applications was launched and widely disseminated through the official websites of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), as well as the official X (formerly Twitter) accounts of both PAPS and AGA-APSA, to ensure broad outreach and equitable access across the continent.

The Open Call attracted a total of eight thousand one hundred and nineteen (8,119) applications from across the continent and its diaspora, reflecting strong interest and broad continental representation. Following a rigorous eligibility and selection process, the Secretariat identified qualified candidates comprising two (2) participants from each Member State, one woman and one man.

This open call has provided first-time participants a meaningful opportunity to engage with the African Union and establish direct connections with its institutions and processes.

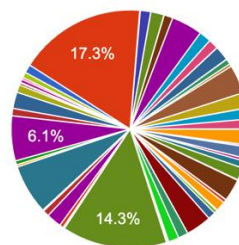
The charts below present an overview and preliminary analysis of the Open Call responses, highlighting the demographic profile of applicants, including gender distribution, nationality, and country of residence and whether they have participated in the AU trainings before.

Gender
8,119 responses

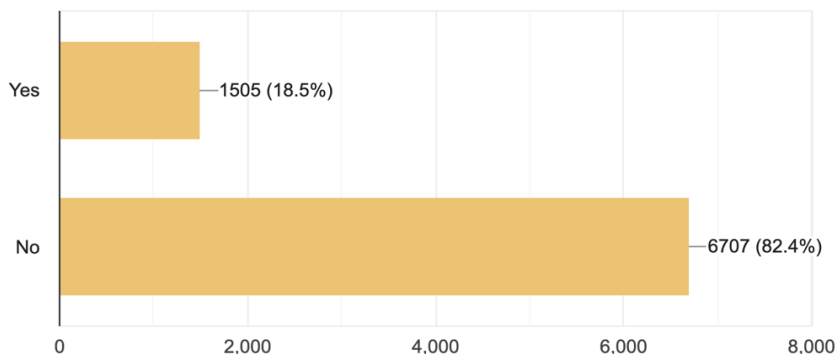


Nationality
8,141 responses

Male
Female



Have you previously participated in any African Union-led or AU-affiliated activities or programmes?
8,141 responses



F. METHODOLOGY

The training will adopt a participatory, adult-learning methodology, combining expert-led presentations with interactive case studies, group discussions, and simulation exercises to reinforce practical application of the concepts covered. The three breakaway groups will be thematically aligned with the Programme's core focus areas, democratic governance, human rights, and electoral processes allowing participants to engage in-depth with the theme most relevant to their interests and national context, while still benefiting from cross-cutting sessions in plenary. Training materials, including the AGA-APSA Training of Trainers (TOT) manuals, Pan African Leadership Manual and related toolkits, will be distributed to all participants to support both the immediate learning experience and continued application beyond the Programme.

Beyond formal training sessions, the Programme is designed to foster peer learning and mentorship among participants, encouraging the exchange of experiences and best practices across different national and regional contexts. To measure learning outcomes and inform future iterations of the Programme, participants will complete a pre-training and post-training assessment, alongside an end-of-programme evaluation survey. Certificates of participation will be issued to all delegates upon successful completion of the Programme.

G. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The workshop will commence with an opening ceremony, followed by a group photo and a short coffee break. Participants will then convene in the plenary hall for a brief presentation of the objectives, expected outcomes, and training arrangements. Thereafter, participants will be divided into three groups, with training sessions running simultaneously in three breakaway rooms. This arrangement will ensure effective delivery of the training methodology. Each group will be facilitated by two expert facilitators, supported by one junior facilitator for skills transfer.

To promote inclusive participation and effective communication, simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four African Union working languages: English, French, Arabic, and Portuguese. Interpretation services will be allocated across all three groups based on the linguistic requirements of participants, ensuring that all delegates are able to engage fully in the discussions. To promote regional integration, experience-sharing, and Pan-Africanism, the Programme will also include an excursion to key sites in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A detailed agenda will be shared with participants ahead of the Programme to guide their preparation and ensure smooth participation throughout the event.

H. DATES AND VENUE

The training programme will take place from 25 to 28 August 2026 at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

All costs associated with the organization of the Programme, including travel tickets, accommodation, and logistical arrangements for participants, will be covered by the African Union Commission.

J. DOCUMENTATION

The documentation for the meeting will be shared electronically, including:

1. Concept Note and Agenda;
2. [Citizens' Engagement Strategy](#);
3. [TOT Manual on Youth Participation in Political and Electoral Processes](#);
4. Pan-African Leadership Manual;
5. Logistics Note.

K. WORKING LANGUAGES

The Workshop will be conducted in English, and simultaneous interpretation will be available in English, French, Arabic, and Portuguese. Working documents will be available primarily **English and French**.

L. CONTACT DETAILS

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