

The African Youth Panel



**African Youth Charter Advocacy Strategy
Guidelines**

2012

INTRODUCTION TO THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

The African Youth Charter was drafted and adopted as a political and legal framework for action that takes stock of the current situation of the youth.¹ Referring to the rights, freedoms and duties of the African youth, the African Youth Charter is the first legal framework provided to Africa, by the relevant actors in the youth area, to support national policies, programmes and actions in favour of youth development. The document was adopted by Heads of States and Governments, and recommended for ratification and implementation. The necessity of having a charter developed for the African youth was stated in the African Union Strategic Planning 2004-2007 to ensure that youth issues are embedded in a legal framework and taken seriously with the deserved attention and care. The drafting process took place between September 2005 and May 2006 through a very interactive approach, engaging youth leaders, youth experts, Ministers of youth affairs, partners and all interested stakeholders. This process was finalized with the adoption of the document by the African Heads of State and Government on 2 July 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia. The African Youth Charter came as an institutional and legal response to youth development and empowerment in Africa.²

IDENTIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF THE ISSUE

The issue addressed by this strategy, highlights the lack or insufficient uptake of the African Youth Charter by the various governments on the African continent. Implementation of the charter has differing statistics on the continent and as such, young people are greatly disadvantaged if this instrument is not domesticated. Some countries in Africa have not yet signed, ratified or implemented the charter.

Additionally issues of specific promises made by the African governments and gaps identified by the youth either in the Charter or in implementation will be taken up.

¹ http://www.africaninitiative.org/af/index.php?Itemid=2&id=7&option=com_content&task=view (retrived on 18th August 2012)

² UNESCO - http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/sv13/news/the_african_youth_charter_is_the_first_legal_framework_in_favor_of_youth_development_interview_with_raymonde_agossou/ (retrieved on 10th August 2012)

Lastly, the African youth will want to be involved in the decision-making processes and will want to advocate for participation in the whole African Youth Charter process including monitoring at continental, national and local levels.

The African Youth Charter has a clear role in addressing the issues young people face and as such, it is aimed at ensuring that young people are fully empowered through their participation in decision making processes, political debates and development processes at all levels. Ideally the charter is also meant to ensure youth have their capacity built to become better leaders and to be given opportunities to network and dialogue on youth development issues. The charter is a powerful instrument mandating African governments to take action and empower young people through its, signing, ratification and domestication.

One role of the AYP is to popularize the African Youth Charter through advocacy to ensure all member governments as mandated; sign, ratify and implement it in their various member countries. AYP shall continually build the capacity of its members in delivering advocacy work through trainings and workshops on advocacy and lobby to be able to implement this strategy efficiently and effectively.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the strategy is to popularize, to explain and to ensure the ownership of the Charter by African youth, youth organizations and all public and non-public stakeholders.

Specifically, in this strategy AYP will endure to find means of how to;

- Advocate for the ratification of the African Youth Charter for countries yet to ratify
- Advocate for incorporation of the Charter within the working programme and policy of the Ministers in charge of youth and all youth development stakeholders
- Popularize and explain the contents of the Charter to ensure its ownership by youth organizations and stakeholders
- Advocate for the implementation of the Charter with public authorities and all youth development stakeholders
- Design and develop mechanisms to follow-up and monitor the implementation of the Charter.

TARGET AUDIENCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The target audiences for this strategy are governments, youth ministries, the media, community leaders, youth and many other stakeholders. AYP shall work with stakeholders to lobby their governments to implement their mandates regarding the charter. However, in selecting partners to work with, the panel shall consider when defining their approach the following;

- Understanding the policy framework of member countries, how policy issues get into the agenda and identify levels at which the intervention can be best made
- Analysing decision making through mapping out who can make the right decision/who has the power to decide and who can influence the decision makers regarding the issue
- Consider and prioritise potential allies and begin networking.
- Identify potential opponents, their arguments and how AYP will win their support.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

Among many other things, youth leaders and youth organizations can do to promote the ratification and implementation of the Charter in their countries and communities, the following are some:

- a) contribute to dissemination and popularization of the charter, and work with Ministries of youth, youth networks, National Youth Councilsto promote the understanding of the content of the charter among youth at all levels (national and local including schools, workshops, religious organisations , etc.) in particular through
 - translation in local languages and large distribution (where possible);
 - specific workshops and meetings with specific targets to facilitate popularization of the Charter;
 - national activities or festivals for the launching of the Charter, with media involvement;
 - communication and information sessions in schools and universities for students and teachers;
 - public rallies, competitions, and marches for country wide information and action;

- advocacy meetings with officials and decision makers.
 - Creative arts
 - Run creative competitions (essay, pictures, arts) to popularise and promote the ratification of the charter
 - In countries where there exist a National Youth Policy, panel members should work to promote the implementation of both the National youth Policy and the African Youth Charter in order to drive popular participation and integration with local policies.
- b)
- Work with parliamentarians, especially those dealing with education, youth development or any related areas, to advocate for the ratification of the charter, through
- special programs with media involving youth organizations and government;
 - celebration of the African Youth National Day and any other cultural and artistic productions and events;
 - celebration of the Year of African Youth.
- c) Support the post ratification process by advocating for the implementation of the charter through creation, improvement and reinforcement of partnerships with the public and private sectors, Diaspora, NGOs, and international institutions.
- d) Support the ministerial work in reporting on progress made in countries, via
- Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) including press and media i.e. websites for interactive entertainment, social media, magazines, TV and radio programmes and TV adverts;
 - Advocacy materials: posters, t-shirts, postal stamps, etc.
 - African traditional communication and exchange channels

SELECTING MESSAGES AND TACTICS

Crafting advocacy messages on the charter like described in the introduction will evolve around popularisation and explaining its contents especially to the local people, ratification and implementation and its institutionalization in development policies.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Through these approaches, AYP hopes to see results through these activities such that;

- Public marches and rallies will create efficient mechanisms for advocacy, lobby and implementation of the African Youth Charter

- Communication and media will ensure an establishment of a dynamic and modern mechanism of communication and popularization and advocacy for the domestication and implementation of the African Youth Charter
- Cultural events channels would provide a popular and periodic platform for the popularization and the advocacy for the ratification/implementation of the Charter, with cultural events such as masquerade, singing, dancing and drama festivals being still the most popular and convivial ways to disseminate information or values. This will ensure that, apart from stimulating exchanges between peoples, generations, societies and regions, there is also efficient ownership of the Charter by populations and different stakeholders.
- The expectations of the youth will be on the decision-making tables around the continent.
- Operational and Strategic objectives of the AYP will be met rendering the relevance of the Panel and need for its sustainability.

TIMELINE

This Strategy shall run from August 2012 to December 2013. Tactical and Action Plans shall be developed with corresponding timelines and budgets for activities. Activities shall start in five pilot countries including The Gambia, Tunisia, Uganda, and a fourth country to be selected. Its four countries

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

AYP will periodically stop to reflect on changes in the local context, successes or failures of specific initiatives and overall advocacy strategy and make adjustments as necessary. It will also plan for future activities and decisions following the end of the advocacy based on its successes or failures and especially when successful, on engaging government in developing and implementing policies etc.

The panel in partnership with Youth organizations and stakeholders will follow up with Ministers in charge of youth to monitor progress at all levels including getting feedback at continental level from the Ministers in charge of youth of the AU.

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